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[HIS LORDSHIP NIBBLES.]

OLIVE'S TRUST.

By the Author of "Fault on Both Sides," &c.

CHAPTER XXI.

Alas! that love, so gentle in his view,
Should be so tyrannous and rough in use.
Romeo and Juliet.

FROM a bed which had given her but little rest Olive Markham rose at an early hour, her brain filled with two great thoughts. One was hope of discovering her father, the other dread, which was almost fear, of her coming interview with her old lover.

There was something in Charles Wilding's manner and appearance that told her more plainly than any words could have done how greatly, how sadly, he had altered since he had come back to England from foreign lands, hoping to make her his wife, and had been repulsed and rejected.

Charles Wilding was a man of strong feeling and impulse, a man easily affected for good or for evil. Judging from his words, Olive could not doubt that her refusal to become his wife had driven him to evil courses, and her old love, which had never died or even faltered, seemed to reproach her in that abode, acting from a sense of duty, had made two lives miserable—his and her own.

He came. She saw him pass the window. Her heart leapt, and she fain would have run to open the door and greet him with the affection she felt, but the time for that was gone—gone never to return. He must be henceforth a comparative stranger to her, yet she still loved him—how dearly none but herself knew.

He entered the little room in which she sat, and the old look was in his eyes; as they rested upon her she was minded to throw herself on the ground at his feet and cry for pardon, but again the sense of propriety restrained her.

Dear heart! how many lives have been embittered, how many life-long sorrows made by that sense of delicacy that forbids a woman to say what she means!

Here in this little room of the semi-detached villa

residence, No. 19, Ramases Terrace, were two people deeply and sincerely attached to each other, and both burning to say as much, yet they met with a cold shake of the hand and a common-place "How d'ye do?" because neither could speak out.

Charles Wilding's proud spirit rebelled against making the first overtures after the way in which he had been rejected, and Olive Markham could not bring herself to utter the plain, unvarnished truth that she loved him now as she had always loved him, and was ready to become his wife if he would but ask her.

For ten minutes, in a broken, loose, disjointed manner, these two spoke of common-places—notably the weather, that unfailing resource for awkward conversationalists; both avoiding anything which could introduce the topic on which each desired to speak.

At last there came a long pause, and Olive bent her eyes down upon the carpet, for she knew the time had come.

"I asked you, Olive, to give me an interview to-day," said Wilding, with something of a nervous huskiness in his voice. "I asked it because I had something particular to say."

"Yes," answered Olive, faintly, and without raising her eyes.

"Years since I told you I loved you."

Olive's heart beat fast, but she answered never a word, although he paused as if expecting her to make some reply.

"On the eve of my departure from England I told you for the first time that I loved you, and through many weary months of peril and exposure I comforted myself with the thought of one at home who cared for me and whom I should one day make my wife. I came back with this hope—I was rejected—my love was wasted."

"Oh, Charlie!" Olive cried, "if you only—"

In another moment she would have confessed that, though her lips had rejected him, her heart had never done so; but he would not give her time to speak.

"Suffer me to say my say," he continued, in a hard voice. "It is not to remind you of your broken vows

I have sought this interview; that is all past now—dead and buried."

He paused again, and Olive clenched her hands tightly together in an agony of despair, for his words sounded in her ears as the death-knell of her hopes.

"I came here with a different purpose," he went on to say. "I came here to defend myself."

"There was no occasion to do so," Olive murmured.

"No occasion!" he replied, angrily, taking her words in a wrong sense. "No, perhaps not for you, who have outlived your love, and don't care what becomes of me; but for my own satisfaction I must tell you how it was you found me yesterday a suitor for the hand and purse of the idiot girl."

Olive bowed her head, and kept it bent downwards to conceal the tears which filled her eyes.

"The reason is simple: I want money. I have no heart to give. I daresay I should be fairly kind to her, if she became my wife; but I must have money, and that seemed to me the easiest way to get it."

"Oh, Charles—Mr. Wilding!"

"Yes; you are naturally disgusted. I thought you would be. Now, do you care to know why I want money? Do you care to learn what has become of all the savings I brought home with me to buy your wedding-dress and take you back with me across the ocean? It was not much—we might have lived on it for a year or two perhaps: I have spent it all in three months."

He paused and looked across the room to Olive, but she neither lifted her head nor spoke.

"Do you ask how it was spent? Do you care to know? I will tell you. It has all been squandered, wasted, frittered away. You would not understand half the details if I gave them you. I spare you them, for the wildest conjectures of your imagination would fall far short of the abyss of recklessness into which I have plunged."

"What drove you to this?"

"You ask me that question? Well, well, I will try to be calm. It was despair. I wanted to forget myself, to forget you, to forget everything in enjoy-

ment; but I found pleasure was not to be so easily bought."

"You terrify me," cried Olive, pushing back her hair from her brow. "I cannot believe you are in earnest!"

Wilding laughed.

"Listen to me," he said; "listen to me for a few minutes longer, then I will leave you for ever. I returned to England full of love for you, and with but one desire in my heart. I came back the night of the Chambercombe ball. I saw you there through the window, laughing, talking, dancing, flirting with that empty-headed idiot, that yellow-whiskered, false-hearted puppy, Groville Paisley, and—"

"Hush! he is dead," said Olive, in a low tone.

"Dead! I know it. Murdered—serve him right! What business had he between me and my love?"

"Oh, Charles!"

"I swore he should never speak to you again, and he never did. Nothing like a sharp knife to get rid of a rival. I learnt that across the seas if I learnt nothing else."

Wilding's excitement had been steadily increasing throughout the interview till it culminated in this final burst of passion, and while Olive stared at him in speechless horror he caught up his hat, and, without a word of farewell, left the room and the house.

Olive sprang to the window. She would have called him back even then and explained to him how groundless was his jealousy, but she was too late. He was far away down the street, while half-a-dozen grizzled and bearded heads poked out of half-a-dozen different windows in Ramases Terrace looking after him, and taking note of the manner and appearance of the bearded gentleman who had been visiting the "stuck-up child" at No. 19.

Slowly and mechanically Olive came away from the window and resumed her seat. For an hour or more she remained silently contemplating the pattern of the carpet, but that pattern was to her but a blurred, indistinct mass of colours running indefinitely the one into the other; her brain was too busy for her eyes to see with any distinctness.

Charles Wilding's last words filled her with an alarm that almost paralysed her. The suspicion had never before crossed her mind that he could by any possibility be implicated in Captain Paisley's murder, but now he himself had suggested the notion.

Surely, she thought, that interpretation must be put upon his sentences, and her heart stood still in sickening horror at her own imagination.

"No, no," she cried aloud, "I will not think it. He was wild—he knew not what he said. Poor Charlie!"

And tender love took the place of fear and mistrust.

I am afraid it is a generally allowed fact that when a man is rude and contemptuous to the lady he professes to love she likes him all the better for it, and that, moreover, the confession of a life of dissipation only leads to the quotation that "A reformed rake makes the best husband." Certainly in the present instance, when Olive had put aside her suspicions, her feelings towards Charlie Wilding had not abated one jot in their tenderness by reason of his conduct during his visit. She pitied him from the bottom of her heart, and we all know pity is closely allied to love.

He had gone—left her for ever. That was indeed hard to bear. The sunlight, she told herself, had faded from her life, and there was no peace for her but in the grave. Then she thought of turning sister of charity, and leaving the hard, cold, cruel world, and took a score of other desperate resolutions, after the manner of young ladies crossed in love, and, being very miserable, answered the faithful Phoebe quite snappily when she came in to lay the table for dinner.

The gas was alight in the little parlour of No. 19, Ramases Terrace, and Olive, with her little, dainty feet resting on the fender, sat gazing sadly and wistfully into the red, glowing fire, brooding over the events of the day, when there came a sharp knock at the door, followed almost immediately by the entrance of Phoebe with a letter.

"A small boy brought it, miss, and there's no answer."

Olive took the envelope, and broke the seal mechanically. The letter had no commencement and no signature, but she knew well enough that the writer was her friend the dwarf.

It was but a short note. The contents were as follows:

"I have obtained fresh information about the emerald ring. The stone was taken away from the jeweller by a Mr. Wilding, the stepson of Sir Lionel Marston, of Ripplebrook. Do you know anything of the young man? Does this fact throw any fresh light upon Mr. Markham's disappearance? I have employed detectives to trace the matter to the end."

The scrap of paper on which these words were written dropped unheeded from her nerveless fingers. Just as she had laid aside the fears as groundless

that Charles Wilding's words had conjured up, there came this fresh and crushing evidence against him. It fairly staggered her. She pressed her tiny hands to her aching temples, while the word "murderer!" seemed ringing in her ears.

What could she do? She loved Charlie dearly, oh, so dearly! Of course now she could never be his wife; but she must save him, if possible—save him from shame and ignominy—perhaps from death by the hands of the public executioner.

She had imagined at Ripplebrook that her love for her father exceeded that for Charlie, but now that she believed the latter to be in imminent danger—for did not the dwarf say the detectives were on his track?—she forgot all about her trust, she disregarded her self-imposed mission, and had but one thought, one desire, and that was to save the man she loved.

She did not think or care whether or not he deserved punishment. She abhorred the crime, but she could not abhor the criminal.

"It may be too late," she moaned, in anguish, "and it is all my doing. It is I who have sought this discovery, it is in my name that Charlie is being hunted down—nay, at this very moment he may be in a felon's prison."

The next instant, acting on a sudden impulse, she dragged a small writing-table towards her, and hastily scrawled a few lines on a sheet of note paper.

"A true friend," she wrote, "warns you that you are in great danger. All must shortly be known. Fly while there is time."

These words she put into an envelope, and directed to Charles Wilding at a club to which she knew he had at one time belonged.

It was quite a chance that the note would reach him, but she thought it worth the experiment, and despatched Phoebe with it to the post-office, bidding her run all the way so that not a single moment might be lost.

CHAPTER XXII.

You know the very road into his kindness

And cannot lose your way.

Coriolanus.

WHILE Olive was draining the cup of bitterness to the dregs, her sisters, Cora and Alice, were being introduced to fashionable life under the auspices of Mrs. Groville Paisley.

That lady, on account of her recent bereavement, could not of course go into society, but amongst her friends she found more than one ready and willing to chaperone two such elegant girls as the Miss Markhams to balls and theatres.

Alice, younger and more shrinking than Cora, failed to make the impression that her good looks warranted Mrs. Paisley in anticipating, but amongst that lady's own set Cora was received with open arms.

Quick in learning, she had not failed to imbibe those lessons of worldly wisdom which Mrs. Paisley had instilled into her mind from the first day of meeting, and she bade fair to become as beautiful and accomplished a coquette as any in London.

She entered heart and soul into all the amusements and festivities of the metropolis, but never allowed the maxim of her instructress to escape her memory, never at any time or under any pretext permitted herself to forget that an advantageous marriage was the be-all and end-all of existence, and "advantageous," used in that sense, meant money for certain and a title if possible.

Cora was an apt pupil, and in less than four months from the date of her arrival in London had positively a young lord dangling in her train, swearing himself the most devoted of her admirers and the most heart-stricken of her victims.

Lord De Darcy was the title of this youthful sprig of the aristocracy, and although his moustache was very small, and his years of experience very few, he had managed to achieve for himself a certain amount of notoriety.

He owned a large stud of racehorses, his bets were colossal, and when he lost, as he generally did, they were paid without a question; further than this, his name had figured once or twice in the papers in connection with certain disturbances at places about the character of which there could be no doubt, and when the famous French danseuse, Mademoiselle Jairetière, came to England it was my Lord De Darcy's carriage, with my lord inside, which went to the station to meet her and conduct her to her lodgings.

We, as faithful chroniclers, are not at all sure that the company who were wont to visit at Mrs. Groville Paisley's house in Mayfair were all of them, strictly speaking, as above reproach as they might have been, although plenty of titled gentlemen might have been seen there in the afternoon, gossiping and chattering in a manner more free and easy than improving; but then it is only charitable to suppose that

lords are not bound by the strict conventional rules that poor commoners have to abide by.

That Mrs. Groville Paisley was the pink of propriety everybody allowed, but for all that she was much more favoured by gentlemen than ladies—in short, Mrs. Paisley lived in a species of respectable fast society, and it was into this coterie she introduced the two country girls whose care she had undertaken.

Her gentlemen friends were delighted with the beauty, the freshness, and the innocence of Cora Markham, and paid her the greatest attention, flattering her to her heart's content, and offering to die at her feet at the rate of one a day on an average.

Mrs. Paisley did not over-estimate her own powers when she believed herself capable of managing an unwieldy train of admirers should they grow too much for Cora herself, and every evening the young girl was accustomed to go through the events of the day with the widow, and take her advice as to what should be done in the future.

Lord De Darcy was soon marked down as a victim. To entangle him in Cupid's meshes was easy enough. He tumbled head over ears into the net as soon as it was spread to catch him, and remained there sprawling, but without showing any inclination to change his position of lover for that of husband.

He sent Cora flowers, jewellery, opera boxes, and everything for which she expressed the slightest wish. He smiled when she looked graciously at him, and scowled when she looked graciously at anybody else—in short, he did everything but propose.

Lord De Darcy had not much of the aristocrat in his appearance. Short, plain, red-haired, and freckled, better able to converse in the language of the ring than to sustain a conversation in accordance with the rules prescribed by Lindley Murray, he might, as far as outward demeanour went, have better adorned any post in life than that of a peer of the realm; but his lordship, for all his somewhat snobbish exterior, was a gentleman at heart, and as good-natured, good-tempered a one to boot as anybody would wish to meet between John o' Groats and the Land's End.

He had seen a good deal of life, and set himself up as something of a cynic, ridiculing marriage, and so on; but a softer-hearted cynic never lived, a more harmless "gallant, gay Lothario" never breathed, and he loved Cora with the true, deep, pure, sincere affection of an English gentleman for an English lady, only he was ashamed to confess it.

But Lord De Darcy, though bold as a lion in all matters of personal courage, had yet one nervous dread he could not overcome. He was extremely sensitive to ridicule.

Had it not been for that he would have laid his heart and his coronet at Cora's feet within a week of being introduced to her, but he dreaded the "chaff" of his friends and companions, most of all of one already known to the reader, Charles Wilding by name, who was a professed misogynist, and vented all the venomous shafts of sarcasm against the holy state of matrimony.

Did Cora love the young lord?

Well, that is a matter difficult to decide. She loved his fortune and his title, and she had no manner of objection to him personally. At all events, there was no one whom she preferred, so that, in the event of his making her an offer, she was fully prepared to give him her heart in all good faith.

Women are variously constituted. Cora and Olive were as different in their loves as in their personal appearance, and neither was able to enter into or even comprehend the feelings of the other.

It was a winter's afternoon. A cold north-east wind came sweeping in gusts round the street corners, bringing with it a sharp, piercing sleet, which seemed to penetrate to the very marrow of those luckless pedestrians who encountered it.

Few people were stirring out of doors that afternoon who had a home and fire by which to remain, and Mrs. Groville Paisley's little tastefully furnished drawing-room, usually the lounging-place of at least three or four gentlemen, was, when the French clock on the mantelpiece chimed half an hour after three, tenanted only by the lady of the house and Cora Markham.

With comfortable chairs drawn close to the fender, they talked by fits and starts as the humour seized them.

Outside, all was cold, dark, gloomy, and lowering, but the interior was bright enough in the crimson fire-glow, and the two ladies did well to concentrate their attention on the incandescent embers and their own neatly shod feet, rather than on the gusty, snowy, slippery, foggy, dismal street outside.

"Nobody coming to-day," said Mrs. Paisley, with a slight yawn, after a long pause.

"No one," answered Cora, starting into wakefulness from the pleasant, dreamy state into which the fire and the dulness had enticed her.

To contradict their words there came at that very moment a prolonged rapping at the street door.

"It's Lord De Dardy," said Cora, complacently. "Well, dear, if it is, do try and bring him to the point," said Mrs. Paisley.

The door opened, and his lordship entered, bearing a magnificent bouquet of hot-house flowers, an offering for Cora.

Usual salutations, usual abuse of the weather, usual interchange of petty nothings and foolish scandals that pass for conversation, then Mrs. Greville Paisley suddenly remembered something which obliged her to leave the room.

"I shan't be long, dear," she said to Cora, with a meaning glance.

Lord De Dardy was already the colour of beetroot, and was nervously fidgeting with the bouquet, which he had not yet found the courage to present.

"Will you—ar—doign—will you—ar—accept—ar—em—yes?"

This speech, not lucid in itself, was made clear by the action which accompanied it.

Cora took the flowers, and went into ecstasies of admiration over them.

"Um—er—ah. 'Sweets to the sweet,' Miss Markham—er—as the—ar—fellar in the playsays—ya-as."

"Oh, my lord!"

"Oh, bore that. Can't you—er—call me—ah—Dolly—like all the other fellows do? Beasley formal that 'my lord.' Call me Dolly."

"I can't—I mean it would seem so strange—I—no—why should I?"

"Why? Because then I—er—could call you Cora, you know."

Cora was playing with a little ring upon her finger, taking it on and off in an abstracted manner, and just at that moment it slipped away and rolled on the ground.

Hunting for a small ring in a fluffy hearth-rug by firelight is not such an unpleasant employment when there are two searchers of opposite sexes with a decided penchant for each other's society.

"Never mind it, my lord," said Cora, resuming her seat, while her devoted awain sprawled on hands and knees, straining his eyes every where to discover the missing trinket.

"But I—ar—do mind—and—here it is. Ah, permit me to—er—restore it to the—ar—finger—ya-as."

Knelling on one knee before Cora, he pressed the ring on to the finger coquettishly extended for it.

"I—er—could remain here for ever," he murmured as he pressed the little hand he held.

His actions contradicted his words, for at that very moment he sprang precipitately to his feet, blushing terribly, for Mrs. Greville Paisley had noiselessly entered the room, and had been a witness of the scene.

"Very good, Dolly—very good," said that lady, tapping him playfully on the shoulder. "I'm delighted you've found the courage to speak at last. Of course I've seen the turn things were taking, and as Cora's protectress I should not have permitted your visits had I not approved of you as a husband for her."

"Oh—er—Mrs. Paisley—don't you know—I—er—that is, I haven't—I mean, I didn't; oh, you know—I—er—ya-as, I didn't mean anything."

"You didn't mean anything underhand," interrupted Mrs. Paisley; "of course not. I am delighted, I assure you. Cora will make a charming wife."

"Ah, ya-as—but fact is—I—er—I didn't—"

"Pray don't apologise any more. I am not so old myself that I cannot make allowances for the feelings of young people. Cora, darling, I'm charmed."

She kissed the young girl with effusion.

Lord De Dardy gave up explanation as a hopeless job, and from that moment, without a murmur, submitted himself to his fate.

It was no hard fate, as none knew better than himself, and, though he had never meant a proposal, he found it pleasant enough when it was forced upon him, and ere he took his departure he was more than reconciled to being an "engaged" man.

"I think I managed that very well for you," said Mrs. Greville Paisley as the door closed on his lordship, and Cora expressed her gratitude in becoming terms.

That evening Lord De Dardy's confidential servant brought a letter to Mrs. Paisley's house, directed to Miss Cora Markham, and that letter, embossed at the top with the noble arms of De Dardy, contained an offer of the writer's hand, heart, purse, and coronet, couched in language that read as if copied from a "Complete Letter Writer," and was written in his lordship's very best copper-plate.

"You ought to be a very happy girl," said Mrs. Paisley.

"So I am," answered Cora.

CHAPTER XXIII.

So Judas kissed his master And cried—all hail!—whopas he meant all harm: Henry VI.

OLIVE, far less happy in her love than her sister, passed a sleepless night, her rest being disturbed by

visions of Charles Wilding in the hands of justice about to pay the dread penalty for his crime.

As a murderer she shrank from him with unspeakable repugnance, but, strange as it may seem, the very knowledge of his guilt rather increased than diminished her love.

It was with the greatest bitterness of heart she reproached herself for her share in bringing about the discovery; willingly would she have undone the past, but that was impossible, and it only remained for her to atone for it.

The letter she wrote to her lover at his club was some relief to her mind, but the remembrance that the dwarf, in his very eagerness to serve her cause, had set detectives on Charles Wilding's track, was a source of the deepest grief to her.

To know that the man she loved was in difficulty and danger brought out the full flow of her affection, even though that knowledge proved his unworthiness.

How could she prevent the inquiries being carried any farther?

Could she not prevent the detectives from doing more?

These were the thoughts that perplexed her mind.

Anything she did with reference to the matter must necessarily be done through the dwarf, and what excuse could she make to him for the sudden change of desire? How could she account to him for the change of feeling that had come over her?

There was but one way, and that was by telling him the whole truth.

Strangely enough it had chanced that this stunted, deformed creature, whom she had never seen five months back, was now the person in whom she reposed her nearest secrets—her only confidant; but she was assured of his worth and of his devotion to her, she felt that she could trust him, and she determined to reveal to him the whole, naked truth, and beseech him to co-operate with her in turning aside the evidence from Charles Wilding.

Full of this scheme, for well she knew that every hour—nay, every minute was of consequence, she passed her day in sore mental disquietude, and with many glances at the clock, longing for the hour to arrive when she might go to his house with the chance of finding him at home.

She had not been there since the afternoon when she had so unexpectedly encountered her old lover, neither in the interval had she seen or heard anything of Miriam.

Her heart bled for the poor girl who had, in her own way, tasted something of the sweets of love, and she longed to put her arm about her waist and gently express her sympathy, while at the same time she explained to her how impossible it was that anything but misery could result from encouraging a passion which could never be gratified.

Olive knew well how difficult it would be to explain to the poor, half-witted girl her own infirmity. Miriam did not think herself in any way differently constituted from the rest of the world, and in a case where she looked upon Olive as a rival would hardly be likely to accept her testimony.

It was dark when Olive left Ramases Terrace for the dwarf's house—dark, on a cold, blustery evening, with the wind swooping and swirling over the heath as if bent on carrying everything before it.

She struggled on bravely against the tempest; no storm that had ever raged would have stayed her in her purpose that evening, for when a woman of deep feeling and strong impulse engages in a work of love she never abandons it with life.

Joseph Shingles's house was dark from garret to basement, and the wind howled and moaned round it dismally and mournfully as Olive entered the garden gate and made her way to the front door.

The dwarf had not come home, but Olive was a well-known visitor, and was, as a matter of course, asked to wait for him.

She entered the house, over which a gloom deeper than usual appeared to have settled, and bade the servant tell Miriam of her arrival. She ardently desired that the dwarf's daughter should not cherish any animosity towards her, and she resolved by every means in her power to endeavour to restore that confidence which the events of her last visit had shaken.

There were no candles in the drawing-room into which Olive was ushered, and the apartment was only illumined by the dull crimson glow of the fire-light.

Olive drew a low couch near the fire, and, seated there, was soon lost in her own thoughts, till, with a start at some slight noise, she looked up and saw reflected in a mirror a tall female figure, clad from head to foot in white, and over whose shoulders flowed a marvellous wealth of long black hair, who regarded her with eyes that seemed to flash fire.

As she gazed, hardly, for the moment, recognising Miriam, the figure raised a clenched hand menacingly, and terrified Olive sprang to her feet and confronted

the dwarf's daughter, who hastily concealed something in her bosom, and, with a smile upon her face that had something in it both unpleasant and unnatural, advanced to meet her.

Olive was alarmed, and not without cause, for there was a wildness, a madness in Miriam's appearance she had never seen before.

In the first days of their acquaintance the brain affection under which the poor girl suffered made her only quiet and interesting, but now there was something in her demeanour which seemed to tell of insanity, and as she fixed her glittering eyes on her visitor, Olive, perhaps mentally weakened by the intensity of her sufferings during the past few days, instinctively shrank back.

"Let me ring for lights," she said, dreading being left alone in the dark with Miriam, and she rang the bell without waiting for a reply.

"You want to see me," said the dwarf's daughter.

"Well, I am still beautiful, but he has left me. The Erl King came to me in a vision last night, riding on his coal black horse with the fiery nostrils, and would have me go with him; but I am faithful—faithful till death, and I sing 'Willow, willow, a-weil a-day; my love he loves and he rides away.' Do you know what I mean?"

Then she laughed a harsh, dry, unpleasant laugh that had nothing of merriment in it.

The servant coming in with lights stopped her or she would have said more, and gave Olive time and opportunity to contemplate her.

Never had she looked so lovely. Her classical, statue-like features looked as if carved in the purest marble, against which her hair, of the blue-black of the raven's wing, came in splendid contrast. Her form, tall, lithe, and slender, draped in long white garments, added to her strange appearance, and showed her faultless figure to the greatest advantage.

"Good Heaven!" thought Olive, "is it possible that one so fair should be mindless?"

Yet so it was. Every word, every look, every action, every gesture served to show that the brain was powerless, and that the unfortunate girl was insane, not passively half-witted as heretofore, but actively mad.

"He came to see me," continued Miriam, "my Robin came to see me in the front and snow, and I would have taken him to my heart and let him nestle there till the spring, but they drove him away and left him to perish in the cold. Hark! Do you hear him outside? I do. Let me go to him."

"Hush, hush!" said Olive, "it is the wind moaning round the house—no more."

"It is not—it is not. It is my Robin, my own true Robin. I know his voice. I will go to him."

She started to her feet and stood with staring eyes and outstretched arms in an attitude so graceful that no artist could have seen it without longing to perpetuate it on canvas.

"No, dear," said Olive, taking one of Miriam's hands in hers, "it is but the wind. Sit down here by me and talk to me quietly and calmly."

"I will not."

"Yes, dear, you will," and she spoke in a tone of gentle authority, despite the alarm she felt. "You know who I am."

Miriam looked at her long and steadfastly, then started back from her with every sign of horror and repugnance.

"Yes, yes, I know you!" she cried, excitedly.

"You are a thief. It was you who drove away my Robin to perish in the snow. You are a bad woman. I hate you."

She hissed out these last words in a tone of such bitterness that Olive shrank back two or three steps.

"Aha, you are frightened of me! You know you have killed him and ruined my happiness. You are a murderess, and those who kill shall be killed. Do you hear me? Are you ready to die?"

Olive laid her hand on the bell, and was on the point of calling for assistance when Miriam's whole demeanour changed, smiles wreathed her face, and with a gentle, supplicating air she drew near Olive.

"Do not be angry with me," she said. "Do not be afraid."

Then she nestled her head on Olive's shoulder as she had been accustomed to do in the olden time, and looked up in her face beseechingly.

"Angry! No, dear, I am not angry with you," said Olive, melted in a moment by compassion, and she smoothed the long black hair that fell in negligent waves over the bare shoulders of the mad girl.

"That is right. I am so glad, for we are friends—great friends—are we not?"

"Yes, dear, I hope so."

"Well, then, as we are great friends, I have a secret to tell you."

"A secret?"

"Yes; but it is for you—you alone."

"What is it?"

"Hush! I cannot tell you here. They are all listening. Come with me—come upstairs and I will tell it you, and you shall see it. I will show it you, and when I am dead you shall have it all for yourself. Follow me."

With quick, even step Miriam crossed the room and beckoned Olive to follow her, but she hesitated, almost dreading to trust herself with one who had evidently no control over her own actions.

"Come, or you are a traitress!" cried Miriam, turning with flashing eyes, and Olive, remembering she had heard it was always best to humour the insane, followed Miriam from the room, along the passage, and up the stairs.

Up, up they went, the dwarf's daughter every now and then turning round to make sure that Olive was following—until they had passed all the inhabited portion of the house and were alone together in one of the garrets, a great, bare room, with sloping roof, destitute of all furniture.

"Nobody can hear us here," said Miriam, with a look of deep cunning in her eyes. "Come with me to the window, and you shall know all."

Olive obeyed, and looked out through the small panes of glass into the garden.

The moon was fitfully struggling with the clouds, and a sudden rift sent a flood of silvery light over the lawn and enabled Olive to see they were looking upon the arbour and shrubbery which had been the scene of her first meeting with Charles Wilding after their separation.

"There," cried Miriam, "that is where they tore him from me—where they lacerated my heart, but I will have my revenge!"

"What is it you wished to say to me?" Olive asked, desiring to turn the unfortunate girl's thoughts from a subject that evidently drove her wild.

"A secret."

"Speak then, dear. No one can hear what you say but me."

"No," Miriam answered, in a tone of deep meaning, "no one can hear—not even if we scream and shout."

"Tell me what you have to say, dear."

"Yes, yes. It is a secret; no one knows it but myself, but you must know it—you shall know it!"

"What is it?"

"Traitor!" cried Miriam, in a frenzy of passion. "Murderess and robber, you have stolen from me the only thing I loved! The secret is, that you must die!"

As she spoke she drew from her bosom a short, sharp-pointed poniard, and, with a yell like that of a wild beast, threw herself upon Olive.

"Help! help!" screamed the frightened girl.

The cry echoed through the deserted rooms of the old house, and the wind moaned and lamented in mournful cadence about the eaves; and the two girls, one with the energetic fury of insanity, the other with the desperation and energy of one fighting for life, struggled alone together in that attic, away from the rest of the house, until a sharp, sudden pain and a gush of hot blood told Olive she was stabbed, and she sank wearily on the floor to see the demoniac eyes of the maniac glaring over her like balls of fire—then she became insensible.

(To be continued.)

KEEP IN GOOD HUMOUR.—It is not great calamities that embitter existence; it is the petty vexations, the small jealousies, the little disappointments, the minor miseries, that make the heart heavy and the temper sour. Don't let them. Anger is a pure waste of vitality; it is always disgraceful, except in some rare cases, when it is kindled by seeing wrong done to another; even that noble rage seldom mends the matter.

FORTIFYING WINES.—Sir J. Lawrence recently asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether 10 per cent. of proof spirit was allowed to be mixed with wines in bond for the purpose of "fortifying;" whether the Board of Customs could allow and had allowed a greater proportion than 10 per cent. of spirit to be mixed with wines; and whether, also, it was true that during the years 1868, 1869, and 1870, numerous cases had occurred of persons receiving permission from the Board to mix with sherry and other wines in bond 15 per cent. of spirit, amounting in quantity to 17 gallons of spirit to each butt of wine. In reply the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the duties of the Customs with regard to the fortifying of wines in bond were regulated by statute. In the case of wine intended to be imported into this country, the Customs would permit them to be fortified to the extent of 10 per cent. of spirit, provided that the whole strength of the wine did not exceed 40 degrees, but with regard to wines intended for exportation, the Customs had power to permit an admixture of a larger quantity of spirit, if it should appear to them to be necessary in order to prevent the wine fermenting in the course of a sea voyage. Sir J. Lawrence then gave

notice that he would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Board of Customs had equal power with regard to permitting the admixture with wines in bond of articles other than spirits for the purpose of fining or flavouring them.

SCIENCE.

USE OF SOLUTION OF SILK IN PHOTOGRAPHY.—Pure silk is soluble in hydrochloric acid, and if the solution be neutralised by ammonia and evaporated an organic chloride of ammonium results, which is capable of use in photography, particularly for salting paper. Paper thus prepared is said to be more sensitive than that salted in the usual way, and in printing gives a warmer tone. It is thought that this salt could also be used in the preparation of collodion-chloride of silver if it were sufficiently soluble in alcohol.

COLOURED FIRES.—A member of the German artillery corps gives the following formulae for making coloured fires.—1. White light: 8 parts saltpetre, 2 parts sulphur, 2 parts antimony. 2. Red light: 20 parts nitrate of strontia, 5 parts chlorate of potash, 64 parts sulphur, 1 part charcoal. 3. Blue light: 9 parts chlorate of potash, 3 parts sulphur, 3 parts carbonate of copper. 4. Yellow light: 24 parts nitrate of soda, 8 parts antimony, 6 parts sulphur, 1 part charcoal. 5. Green light: 26 parts nitrate of baryta, 18 parts chlorate of potash, 10 parts sulphur. 6. Violet light: 4 parts nitrate of strontia, 9 parts chlorate of potash, 5 parts sulphur, 1 part carbonate of copper, 1 part calomel.

DETECTION OF BLOOD STAINS.—Iodide of potassium dissolves traces of blood, even from clothing which has been thoroughly washed, but hæmin crystals cannot be obtained from the solution. Mr. Gunning has discovered in the acetate of zinc a reagent that precipitates the slightest traces of the colouring matter of blood from solutions, even where the liquids are so dilute as to be colourless. Blood washed from the hands in a pail of water can readily be detected in this way. The flocculent precipitate thrown down by the acetate of zinc must be washed by decantation, and finally collected on a watch-glass, and allowed to dry, when the microscope will readily reveal hæmin crystals if any blood be present. This test has been repeatedly tried with entire success.

DYERS' RECIPES.

DARK BLUE, SUITABLE FOR THIBETS AND LASTINGS.—Boil 100 pounds of the fabric for one hour and a half in a solution of 20 pounds of alum, 4 pounds of tartar, 6 pounds of mordant, 6 pounds of common extract of indigo; cool as usual. Boil in fresh water from 8 to 10 pounds of logwood, in a bag or otherwise, then cool the dye to 170 degrees Fah. Reel the fabric quickly at first, then let it boil strongly for one hour. This is a very good imitation of indigo blue. Chemie can be used in the preparation; but should the shade require more of the indigo while finishing in the logwood, extract of indigo ought to be used.

The old English way of colouring a black-blue on lastings is by boiling 100 pounds of the fabric for one and a half hours in a solution of 10 pounds of alum, 1 pound of copperas, and 1 pound of blue vitriol; take the goods out, cool them, and boil them for one hour in a dye containing 10 pounds of logwood. This colour would not look well on soft goods, such as Thibets, as in fact it is only a dark slate; but it looks better on lastings, on account of its gloss.

N. B.—To all these colours the logwood can be boiled in large quantities, say a barrelful in a hog-head of water at a time, 2 pounds of logwood being reckoned to a pail of liquid. This will save boiling the chips in a bag. Five pails will be equal to 10 pounds of chips. It has this advantage, too: more can be easily added if the shade require darkening. Extract of logwood should never be used for blues, as it will produce dull colours on account of its being disoxidised by time.

SAXON BLUE.—100 pounds of Thibet or comb yarn, 20 pounds of alum, 3 pounds of cream of tartar, 2 pounds of mordant, 3 pounds of extract of indigo, or 1 pound of carmine instead; the latter makes a better colour. When all are dissolved, cool the kettle to 180 degrees Fah.; enter and handle quickly at first, then let it boil half an hour, or until even. If the fabric be not soiled clean, it will look shady; and about 5 pounds of common salt added will remedy this. Remember long boiling dims the colour. Zephyr worsted yarn ought to be prepared first by boiling it in a solution of alum and sulphuric acid, then the indigo added afterwards. For common coarse carpet yarn, it is only necessary to handle it through a hot dye of 175 degrees Fah., containing 15 pounds of alum, 10 pounds of sulphuric acid, 4 pounds of chemic paste, to 100 pounds of yarn, or through its equivalent of extract of indigo. If chemic be used, the dye ought not to come to a

boil, otherwise the impurities of the indigo will colour the yarn and dull its brilliancy. Rinse well in water before drying. The tin acid fastens the colour somewhat. It will not fade so easily nor run into the white if woven into flannels, which have to be secured in soap, and bleached. The colour changes in the sulphur house into a stone-green shade, but the original colour comes back again when the fabric is rinsed again in water.

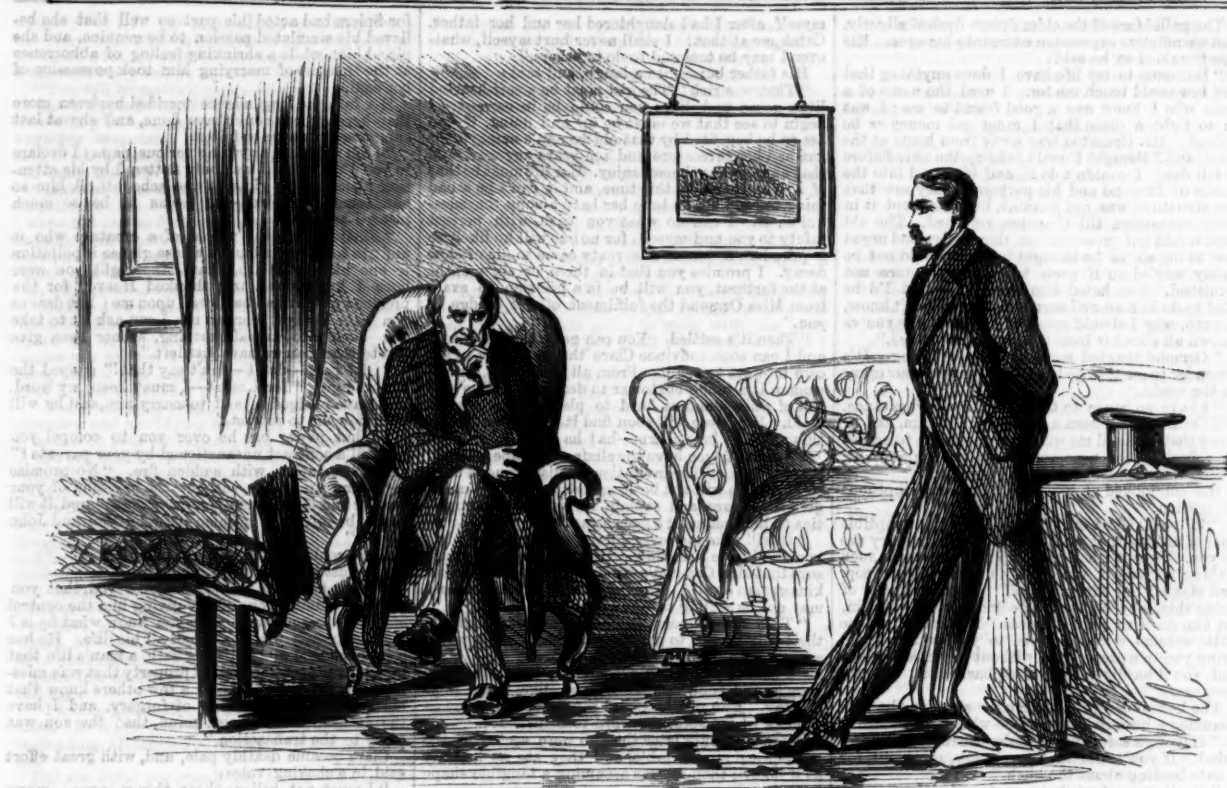
PRUSSIAN BLUE.—Prussiate of potash was formerly only used on cotton, with a preparation of iron first; and, about the year 1838, was first used on woollens, and, of course, no one then thought that they could be coloured without giving the fabric a preparation of iron before entering into the prussiate of potash solution. Every dyer had his preference to one or the other solutions of iron; they were nitro-muriate of iron, acetate, and tartrate of iron. Some used iron oxide (burnt copperas) dissolved in sulphuric acid, etc.; but later the yellow prussiate was only used until the introduction of the red prussiate of potash. The latter has the preference, as it can be added for darkening the shade while in the process of colouring, which is not the case with the yellow prussiate of potash; but this would rot the cloth, as this colour requires a large quantity of acid.

To 100 pounds of wool or flannel dissolve 8 pounds of red prussiate of potash, 2 pounds of tartaric acid, 2 pounds of oxalic acid, 5 pounds sulphuric acid. Handle the fabrics in this for half an hour at 120 degrees Fah.; then reel the goods out, and heat to about 165 degrees Fah.; add 5 pounds of sulphuric acid, and 14 pounds of tin crystals; stir all well, enter the goods, and handle for half an hour longer; then heat it to 208 degrees Fah., when it will be a good blue. The shade can be varied to any extent by the addition of logwood liquor and a few pounds of scarlet spirit; but the liquor ought to be cooled first, and the goods handled quickly to secure evenness while in the logwood. This colour ought never to boil, especially when colouring with steam, as more than boiling heat (212 degrees) destroys the colour and makes it lighter; but letting the fabrics lie a few hours exposed to the oxygen before rinsing is an improvement to the colour. This colour must be well washed or else it will smut. This blue will be brighter if aniline purple be used for darkening instead of logwood; but this ought to be done after the goods have been washed and in fresh water. If a mordant of 10 pounds nitric acid, 36 degrees B., 10 pounds muriatic acid, 22 degrees B., 10 pounds sulphuric acid, 66 degrees B., diluted with water, and 1 pound feathered tin added, be used instead of sulphuric acid the colour will be fast.

ANILINE BLUE.—To 100 pounds of fabric dissolve 14 pounds of aniline blue in 3 quarts of hot alcohol; strain through a filter, and add it to a bath of 180 degrees Fah.; also 10 pounds of Glauber's salts, and 5 pounds of acetic acid. Enter the goods, and handle them well for twenty minutes; then heat it slowly to 200 degrees Fah.; then add 5 pounds of sulphuric acid, diluted with water. Let the whole boil twenty minutes longer, then rinse and dry. If the aniline be added in two or three proportions during the process of colouring, it will facilitate the evenness of the colour. The blue, or red shade of blue, is governed by the kind of aniline used, as there is a variety in the market. Hard and close weave fabrics, such as braid, ought to be prepared in a boiling solution of 10 pounds of sulphuric acid and 2 pounds of tartaric acid before colouring with the aniline, as this will make the fabric more susceptible to the colour. Blues soluble in water colour more easily than those which have to be dissolved in alcohol.

OBJECTIONS TO OXYGEN FOR ILLUMINATING.—Many advantages have been claimed for the use of oxygen as an illuminator on a large scale by the inventors of the different processes. It is now stated on the other hand, however, that the entire process of manufacture has many grave practical difficulties, especially in regard to the preservation and the distribution of the gas; since iron reservoirs and pipes, especially when moistened, are so liable to be attacked by the oxygen as to be soon rendered useless, thus requiring some new material for this purpose. The illuminating apparatus also requires to be totally changed, and unless the mixture of oxygen is made with the greatest exactness the idea of the economy of the illumination is illusory. Furthermore, the intensity of the light is very variable, according as the oxygen is more or less mixed with air and moisture. So far as regards the economical introduction of this method of illumination the ordinary gas companies are assured that they have nothing to fear from competition.

In reply to an inquiry, the Commissioners of Inland Revenue have intimated that "there is no exemption from stamp duty in favour of cheques drawn by school boards."



CLARE ORMOND.

CHAPTER III.

SPIERS resumed his natural manner, which was that of a bold swaggerer, whistled a merry tune, and retraced his steps, congratulating himself on the success with which he had played the part of Bombastes Furioso towards the frightened girl.

He bitterly resented Mr. Ormond's contemptuous treatment, but he intended to be even with him yet, and take from him the daughter who he knew was the darling of his heart, when it pleased him to claim her as his wife. He did not intend to be in a hurry about this, for there was much to be settled about Clare herself before it would be to his interest to force her to fulfil the pledge he had so cruelly extorted from her.

He moved jauntily through the streets of the town, returning the numerous greetings he received with a bow and smile; and more than one young girl turned to look after him, thinking what a romantic-looking creature he was, with his dark, half-tamed look and fine figure. He at length gained a side street, and entered a drug store of pretentious appearance, with the usual display of plate-glass in the windows, behind which were arrayed jars of coloured water, and various fancy articles.

A tall, cadaverous-looking man, with hard black eyes, thin lips, and watchful expression, stood at the farthest end of the shop, making an entry in his ledger before going upstairs to supper, for Mr. Spiers's family lived in the rooms above his place of business.

He looked up sharply as his son entered, and, in curt tones, said:

"So-o—you've come at last. I suppose you've been philandering after that Ormond girl again, though she's as poor as Job's turkey. You had better mind what you are about, young man, or you and I won't be friends much longer."

"I don't believe Job ever had a turkey, or that such birds were known to the inhabitants of the country he lived in, so your comparison doesn't hold good. Besides, I'll tell you a secret. Miss Ormond has a good chance to be rich. She doesn't know it yet, neither does her family, but it's true all the same. So you see she's not to be placed in the same category with that mythical turkey of the old Hebrew."

The elder Spiers opened his eyes widely at this statement. He eagerly said:

"What expectations has she, and how did you find them out?"

"That's my secret; but I'll enlighten you if you will come into the back room, where there are no

eavesdroppers. Where's Beal? Call him to take charge of the shop while we talk together."

"He's packing some things, but he can leave them till to-night. Speak to him, and tell him he's wanted."

John Spiers went into a large, dreary-looking apartment in the rear, where a lad of sixteen was engaged in packing away bottles in a square box. He spoke to him gruffly:

"Go to my father; he wants to talk with me; and mind, youngster, you're to look sharp after the shop, and not try to hear what we are saying."

The youth raised his face, red with the exertions he had been making to get his task done. It was a good, honest face, and he coldly said:

"I generally attend to my own business, and I am sure I do not care to meddle with yours, let it be what it may."

"So much the better for you. So go, now, and keep your distance from this end of the shop. What I am going to tell the governor will be known far and wide soon enough; but it's my secret now, and I don't want it blown out too soon."

Young Beal went into the shop without replying, and Mr. Spiers came into the room in which his son was waiting, and carefully closed the door.

"Now what is this wonderful windfall that has come to lift Reggy Ormond out of the mire into which he has cast himself? I hate that man, and I am sorry that any good luck has fallen into his way."

"I don't love him myself, but it's not to him that the money is coming. He may get a slice of it, but not even that if I can help it. But it is the eldest daughter who will be invited to live with a rich old aunt of her mother's, and if Mrs. Adair likes her, she intends to give her all her fortune. A nice little fortune it is too, for the old lady is very rich. She owns property that brings her in some thousands a-year."

"Nonsense! Who told you all this?"

"She has no relations but these Ormonds, or rather Mrs. Ormond and her children, for she has no good opinion of him, and wouldn't care to claim him as a relation, since he's proved a failure. The old lady doesn't believe in unsuccessful relations."

"Upon my word, you talk of this Mrs. Adair as if she had been your most intimate friend ever since you were born. I never heard of her before, which is strange, considering that you know so much about her and her circumstances."

"I never heard of her either till lately, but I know all about her from—from a friend, and what I tell you is true."

"What friend?" asked his father, impatiently.

"I must know all about this affair, to make sure that you are not humbugging me to get my consent

to let you make love to that poverty-stricken girl you've taken such a fancy to lately."

"I thought you knew me well enough to be certain that I would never look at a woman twice if she hadn't money, or the chance of getting it. I have too much of your nature in me to do that."

Spiers laughed grimly.

"I am glad to hear you say that, John, for I began to think that the girl has bewitched you, in spite of your better judgment. But I insist on knowing how you gained such accurate information of this Mrs. Adair and her affairs."

"Well, I suppose I'll have to tell you," replied the younger man, rather reluctantly. "I have a friend in the camp—that is, in the old lady's house. There is a young woman living there that I knew very well some time ago. In fact, I was rather sweet on her once; but that's all at an end. She has travelled, and I met with her on shipboard coming from Italy, where she had been living as companion to some rich woman. She was after that recommended to Mrs. Adair in that capacity, and she's been living at Riverdale for the last few months."

"Hum—and I suppose you keep up a correspondence with this person, in spite of your alleged indifference to her now?"

"I didn't say I am indifferent to her; I like her as well as I can like any one besides myself; but I can't marry her because she's poor. I do write to her, and it is from her that I learned what I've told you. Mrs. Ormond's grandmother was the sister of this old lady, but there was a family quarrel, and there has been no intercourse kept up between them. Mrs. Adair is nearly seventy years old, and her only descendant, a grand-daughter, was drowned a few years ago. To shorten the story, she wants an heiress, and she's going to adopt the eldest daughter of Mrs. Ormond, and if she should please her she intends to give her all her fortune."

"You are a sharp one, you are, John. I might have known that you were not going to compromise yourself with a penniless girl. But how do matters stand between you and Miss Ormond? Is it all fair sailing, and are you likely to enter the port of matrimony as soon as the fortune is hers?"

A cloud came over the face of Spiers, and he brusquely said:

"Of course I wasn't going to tell you all this if I wasn't sure of the ground I stand on. I am engaged to Clare Ormond, and I hardly think she'll back out after what has passed between us this afternoon, even if the old man does rave worse than he did when he came on us in the road. He spoke of you as if you were beneath contempt, and treated me as if I was of no more account than the dirt under his feet."

The pallid face of the elder Spiers flushed slightly, and a vindictive expression came into his eyes. His lips trembled as he said:

"But once in my life have I done anything that the law could touch me for. I used the name of a man who I knew was a good friend to me; I was in so tight a place that I must get money or be ruined. Mr. Cranston was away from home at the time, and I thought I could take up the note before it fell due. I couldn't do it, and it passed into the hands of Ormond and his partner. They saw that the signature was not genuine, but they kept it in their possession till Cranston returned. The old man would not prosecute me, though Ormond urged him to do so, as he thought business could not be safely carried on if such transgressors were not punished. I've hated him ever since, and I'd be glad to do him an evil turn if I could. I don't know, though, why I should speak of this now, for you've known all about it from the time it happened."

"Ormond taunted me with it this evening. It's a wonder to me that he hasn't proclaimed your crime to the world."

"I have no cause to thank him for forbearance. Old Cranston had been a good friend to him, and he knew that he liked me well enough to wish to screen me; besides, the note was for a trifling amount, which wasn't worth making a fuss about."

His son looked at him with a half-contemptuous expression.

"So, you risked everything for a contemptible sum of money that would only be of temporary use to you. Now if I had made up my mind to do such a thing as that, I would have made a bold sweep, and cleared out with my spoil. What's the use of doing things by halves? If a man acts the villain, let him do it to some purpose. I think if a nice little scheme were proposed to you which would bring you in a pretty sum, without any risk to yourself, you'd hardly refuse to embark in it. Would you, now?"

The keen face of the sister grew sharper, the eyes assumed a hungry look, and she whispered:

"If it were safe, and all under the rose, I wouldn't mind. If you've got anything to say, speak out, for I hate beating about the bush."

"Don't you get excited now, for what I am going to say is very important. That old lady we spoke of is very frail, and can't last more than a year or two; but that's longer than I want to wait for her hoards. Can't we mix up something to hurry her on the way a little?—something that would be sure but not too quick in its action? You know all about such things, and you could easily do what I want. I couldn't marry the girl, you know, till Mrs. Adair is safely disposed of, for she'd never look at me as the husband of her heiress."

"No, no, John; that will never answer. How could we hope to escape detection, even if that good friend of yours is willing to help us put her employer out of the way? I suppose you've sounded her before you spoke to me?"

"No, indeed. Claudia Coyle knows nothing of my plans, nor would I for the world make her the agent in this thing. I do not want power over her, but over another, who shall become our innocent accomplice, and find out when it is too late what she has done."

"I don't understand you, John. I wish you would explain yourself more clearly."

"If you'll have patience, I will. Clare has all the silly superstitions that nurses are so fond of instilling into children. Among others, she believes in magic philtres and love charms. As she will go to the old lady on trial, and if she do not take a fancy to her, she may be sent back home, and the other sister taken in her place, Clare will very naturally wish to use every means to win her great-aunt's approbation. We can give her a liquid preparation to mix with the old lady's wine, and make her believe that it will have no injurious effect upon her health. You must compound it very skillfully, that the gradual decay may seem to be that of old age."

"But—but—you are making your future wife the agent of a murder, John; and the fortune you may get a little sooner by this course will be too dearly purchased, I think. If Mrs. Adair is delicate, old as she is, she cannot last much longer."

"Can't you understand things without having them explained to you in detail? If I have no hold on Clare Ormond, she will seize the first opportunity to set me adrift. I found out this afternoon that she has only been flirting with me, but I took such measures with my lady as frightened her into giving me a promise to marry me. I played the furious, despairing lover to perfection, I think. I made her believe that I would kill her and myself, and perhaps some one else she loves, if she refused my prayers. Ha! ha! If she had been a few years older, I wouldn't have dared to play that game, but she took it all for gospel, and when she saw her father coming she pledged herself to me to save him from danger. It was a rich scene; and the poor, trembling thing really believed I was in earnest about killing

myself, after I had slaughtered her and her father. Catch me at that! I shall never hurt myself, whatever I may be tempted to do to others."

His father burst into a laugh, and said: "That was rich! The girl must be a soft-hearted little goose to believe you could be in earnest. I begin to see that we must be up and doing, if you are to be benefited by that old woman's money. She has had her threescore and ten years any way, and that's as much as she can enjoy. Her life must be that of a mere drone by this time, and it can't be a bad thing to send her to tune her harp among the celestial choir. I can do what you wish with perfect safety to you and myself, for no one will be likely to inquire how a woman of seventy came to die of slow decay. I promise you that in three, or six months at the farthest, you will be in a position to exact from Miss Ormond the fulfilment of her pledge to you."

"Then it's settled. You can get the stuff ready, and I can soon convince Clare that it will be to her own interest to use it. From all I can hear, the old woman is a tough customer to deal with. She's as full of whims, and as hard to please as a spoiled child. Her niece will soon find it necessary to use this valuable love charm—ha! ha!"

"When can you have the elixir of fortune ready?" asked John. "The invitation to Miss Ormond to go to Riverdale will not be long delayed, and I must give it to Clare, and explain its wonderful properties to her, before she goes away."

"It will take me several days to prepare it, but you shall have it in time. However, are you quite sure that Miss Ormond's parents will let her go to her kinswoman at all? They are very fond of her, and may not be willing to give her up."

"They are as poor as church mice, and this is their only chance to get their heads up in the world again. I have no fears on that score."

"I believe you are right. There is the bell for supper, and your mother doesn't like to be kept waiting. Run upstairs, and say that I will meet her as soon as I have spoken a word to Beal."

A few moments later the two were seated at the well-spread supper table, and they ate as heartily as if no evil thought was assuming a tangible shape in their callous souls.

CHAPTER IV.

CLARE ORMOND walked away with her father in so pitiable a state of agitation that for many moments he forbore to say anything farther to her. Struck to the heart, as he was, by the confession of her clandestine engagement to a man for whom he had no respect, who had nothing to recommend him to his daughter's notice but a fine person and plausible manner, he thought it best to allow her time to overcome her overwhelming agitation before he attempted to utter the remonstrances that crowded to his lips.

Mr. Ormond recalled the past of this young man as far as it was known to himself, and he felt that it would be a less grief to him to lay his child in a premature grave than to give her, in her young purity, to the lover who had so daringly asserted his right to her.

As a boy, John Spiers had been notoriously depraved, and at seventeen he had run away from his home and gone to sea. Five years were spent in a wandering life, and he came back with a considerable sum of money, which he asserted was the fruit of his own industry. He joined his father in the business he followed, and for the last seven years had applied himself in a desultory manner to the pursuit he had undertaken. But the monotony of life on shore palled on him, and at intervals he had made three voyages.

Mr. Ormond, with many others, had doubts as to how the money he had brought home with him from his first wanderings had been acquired. It was whispered that a passenger in the vessel of which he was then acting as mate had died in a sudden and mysterious manner; that John Spiers nursed him in his last illness; and when his effects were examined before sealing them up for transmission to his relatives a small box, which the sick man had carefully guarded, was nowhere to be found.

As others had free admission to Mr. Jones's apartment, the theft could not certainly be fixed on the attentive mate; but when the facts became known to those who had been acquainted with Spiers in his boyhood few persons gave him even the benefit of a doubt. His father enlarged his business soon after, but he asserted that a kinsman had left him a legacy, and to that his son had added a hundred pounds saved by him from his wages.

With these recollections surging through his excited mind, Mr. Ormond remained silent till a turn in the road concealed them from the sight of the man, who glowered after them with the resolution in his mind to control the fate of his victim at any cost to herself.

Clare drew a long breath of relief as the intervening trees hid them from the lover whom she believed half-maddened by the fear of losing her;

for Spiers had acted [his part so well that she believed his simulated passion to be genuine, and she pitied him, while a shrinking feeling of abhorrence at the thought of marrying him took possession of her soul.

Her father's long silence terrified her even more than harsh words could have done, and she at last summoned courage to falter:

"I did not mean anything serious, papa; I declare to you I did not. I was only flattered by his attentions, because the girls at the school think him so handsome; and—and—he seems to be so much pleased with me."

"Flattered by the notice of a creature who is unfit to touch your hand! whose glance is pollution to one like you! Oh, Clare, the night you were born I knelt down and thanked Heaven for the precious gift it had bestowed upon me: but dear as you have always been to me, I can ask it to take you back into its safe keeping, sooner than give you to that man we have just left."

"Oh! papa—don't—don't say that!" gasped the agitated girl, "for I must—I must keep my word. I—I have pledged myself to marry him, and he will not allow me to retract."

"What power has he over you to compel you to fulfil a contract unanctioned by your parents?" asked her father, with sudden fire. "No promise is binding upon you without the consent of your mother and myself, and you may rest assured it will never be given to a union between you and John Spiers."

Clare could only repeat, in faint tones:

"I must keep my word, papa."

"What hold has that wretch over you, that you insist on ruining your life by giving him the control of it? Are you mad? Do you know what he is? He has been a wild, bad man all his life. He has been suspected of tampering with a man's life that he might possess himself of property that was missing after his death. I and a few others know that his father has been guilty of forgery, and I have the assurance in my own mind, that the son was privy to the transaction."

Clare became deathly pale, and, with great effort said, in a choking voice:

"I must not believe these things, papa; many men are suspected of crimes they never thought of committing. Mr. Spiers is a man of fiery temper, and he may have done many wrong things, but I refuse to believe that he could have done what you accuse him of. I will tell you the truth; I have foolishly encouraged him. He—he almost wrung from me the promise to marry him; but I am afraid—yes, afraid—to break my word. He would be so desperate then, for he seems so madly in love with me that—that I do not know what he might do."

"Then he has dared to threaten you! He is a cowardly cur, I tell you, Clare, and he would never attempt anything that could bring upon him the vengeance of the law. Leave me to deal with him, my child. Only assure me that you do not love him, and I will extricate you from him without trouble."

"Love him!" repeated Clare, her frame thrilling with repulsion as the words passed her lips. But the denial that trembled on her tongue was repressed as the memory of Spiers's threats came back to her, and the horrible vision his words had conjured up arose before her fancy, nerving her to endure anything herself rather than endanger a life so precious as that of her father. She slowly said:

"I am too young to understand my own feelings, perhaps, but I have recklessly engaged him to that extent that I believe it would be a great wrong to him to give him up now, even at your command. Dearest father, do not press me farther now. Mr. Spiers does not ask me to marry him at once. He spoke of a probation of a year or two; hoping, I suppose, that in that time he would recommend himself to you, and win your consent to our union. I entreat that you will forbear towards him; that you will be courteous to him—and something—and something may—"

Her voice died away suddenly, for she dared not utter the hope that some avenue of escape would be opened to her, and this man, who had now become so odious to her, be for ever cast out of her life.

Her father waited a moment, expecting her to go on, but finding that she did not, he gravely said:

"You puzzle me, as well as distress me sorely, Clare. There is some mystery in this affair that I cannot comprehend; for I cannot believe that you are really attached to so inferior a person as John Spiers. It is great presumption in him to approach you in the character of a lover, for the position of his family is equivocal, his own reputation by no means good, and but for my loss of fortune you could never have been thrown in contact with such as he. He has been a common sailor, then steward on board a ship, and only arose to the position of mate in a vessel of which his father is part owner. With such antecedents, do you think this man a fitting match for the descendant of the Ormond and De Courcys? You refuse to give me your con-

fidence; but I, in my turn, assure you that I will use every effort that is possible to save you from so wretched a fate as must be yours as the wife of such a miscreant as I believe Spiera to be."

"You will be careful, papa; you will not be rude or harsh towards him? You—you will remember how wildly he loves me, and not provoke him to do anything desperate. No one can foretell what a man of his temperament may do if—he feels himself badly treated."

"Have no fears on my account, Clara. I shall not forget that I am a gentleman, though I know that I have not one to deal with in this matter. If you have in your heart any feeling stronger than pity for Spiera, put it away from you resolutely, for you cannot and shall not marry him."

A little cheered by this assurance, Clara said: "Let us talk no more on this subject now, papa. We are getting near home, and I beg that you will spare me any farther remonstrance to-night. Of course you will tell mamma how thoughtless I have been, but, if you love me, you will not do it till after I have retired for the night."

"Yes, I will keep from her as long as possible the stunning and mortifying fact that you have taken your fate in your own hands, and are ready to run to the evil one with one of his own children," said Ormond, with intense bitterness. "Remember one thing, Clara; the day that gives your hand to that man will behold a final rupture between you and your own family. As his wife, you cease to be my daughter. You think, perhaps, that he has money, and he can give you back the luxury I can no longer surround you with. Sacrifice yourself for it, if your will proves stronger than mine, then break your heart over the certainty you will soon obtain, that you have sold yourself into slavery to a brutal tyrant, to whom you are only attractive because you have youth and fair looks."

Clara felt as if she must cry out in her anguish and say:

"I loathe him as deeply as you do, but I fear him more. It is for your life, for my own, that I am contending, although you use such fearful words to me."

But she dared not speak the truth. She had no idea how lightly her father could be blown away that dreadful cloud which had so suddenly fallen on her life, if she had only possessed courage to repeat to him all that had passed between herself and Spiera that afternoon.

That her desperate lover would shoot Mr. Ormond down in a sudden paroxysm of demoniac passion was the dread that had taken possession of her heart, and to save him from that danger she felt as if self-immolation was possible to her. She also thought of her own warm, young life-blood shed by the hand of her infuriated adorer, if she proved false to him at last, and, with the terror he had lately inspired in her, she feared to betray to those who might have extricated her from his power the conflict that raged in her soul.

Mrs. Ormond had walked down to the gate, and was leaning upon it watching the two approach. With the quick intuition of love she saw that something had gone very much amiss, and she looked from one face to the other, her bright eyes trying to pierce to the truth but partially masked by the attempt to be calm as they drew near her.

"You are very pale, my darling," she said to Clara, "yet it is a warm evening, and I thought your walk would make new roses bloom on your cheeks."

"I am very tired," was the reply. "I think a cup of tea will do me good, and there is the bell now."

A faint silver tinkle came from the verandah, on which stood Christine, the second daughter—a very young girl yet, who looked like a fairer edition of her handsome mother. She wore her hair in close curls, and still wore the short dress and high boots which had lately come in fashion for very young girls. They suited her especially now, for she was enchanted with the new world opened to her in her country life, and entered with energy into all the servant's efforts to improve the appearance of the long neglected place which had fallen to his charge.

No words were exchanged between the three, and when they gained the steps Christine exclaimed:

"I declare you look as solemn as three well-behaved owls. As that's the bird of wisdom, papa, you and mamma cannot take exception to my comparison. Clara looks like a very white one, and you elders like respectable gray ones. What has sister been doing with herself that she seems ready to faint?"

"Nonsense," said Clara, in a vexed tone; "nothing is the matter with me. I am only overcome by the heat of the evening, and I have taken a long walk."

"Oh, if that's all, a cup of tea will set you up again, and it's quite ready. And, mamma, my late radishes are not so hot as you predicted they would be. I have a nice dish of the prettiest little pink things you ever ate. Victor brought home a basket of fish, but he fell in the pond at Mr. West's, and

Tom pulled him out again. I made him drink some hot tea and go to bed, and he's fast asleep now."

Mrs. Ormond hurried in to look after the condition of her son herself, and her husband said:

"What a busy bee you are, Christine; I declare, child, you will shame me out of my indolent habits yet."

"That's what I've been trying to do," said the saucy girl, with a brilliant smile. "If I can only get you away from your mooring chair once, I think you'd find yourself so much better that you would take to hard work, and help me and mamma in our little plans for making things nicer. Come now—I've put a vase of June roses on the table, and you can't think how pretty it looks. Old Katy says I'm getting to be a real help to her."

"And to me too, dear, for I should not know what to do without two such bright spirits as you and your mother. I am going to work with you after this, Christine, and you shall see what wonders I will accomplish."

"Don't promise too much at first," cried Christine, "for people that promise much don't often keep their word. You see, you've not been accustomed to work with your hands, papa, and you mustn't try too much in the beginning, or you'll get disgusted with the whole thing, and throw it up."

"What a little Solomon it is!" said her father, making an effort to smile down on her. "Here is mamma, and I think we had better go in to tea."

He passed his arm around Christine, and Clara felt as if she was somehow cast out from the high place she had hitherto held in his regard. Her tender heart ached and fluttered, and she was sorely tempted to throw herself upon his breast, and implore his protection from the lover he thought her so infatuated with that she was ready to marry him in spite of all the opposition that could be offered on the part of her friends.

They passed through a hall of moderate dimensions, and found the table set on a wide back gallery shaded by an immense walnut tree. Mr. Ormond praised Christine's taste and neatness, but he had no appetite for the food set before him. Clara pitifully thought:

"It is my fault that he cannot eat; I hoped to be a help and a comfort to him, and now I am only a worry and a burden. Oh! if I only dared to tell him all!"

Christine noticed that her father merely trifled with the food he took on his plate, and she said:

"If you don't eat one of my radishes, papa, I shall think it was not worth while to raise them. See what a beautiful colour they are; they are nice and crisp, too."

Mr. Ormond took one, with a smile, and said:

"I believe you are to be the pet and darling of our humble home after all, Christine. You are a good child, and I believe you will never willingly give your parents a headache."

Clara had made no effort to eat. She sat silently sipping her tea; but when her father spoke thus she pushed the cup from her, and, rising from the table, said:

"Please excuse me, mamma; I have a headache, and I think I will go to my room and lie down."

The mother nodded, and she went away.

The parents exchanged glances, and Christine said:

"I hope Clara is not going to be ill. She looks so out of sorts this evening that I can't imagine what has happened to her."

"What I think can never happen to you, Christine, for you have less vanity and nonsense about you than your sister," said Mr. Ormond, in a tone that caused the young girl to open her eyes widely, for Clara had hitherto been the pride and darling of his heart.

(To be continued.)

ACTIVE PEOPLE.—The most fallacious ideas prevail respecting leisure. People are always saying to themselves, "I would do this, and I would do that, if I had leisure." Now, there is no condition in which the chance of doing any good is less than in the condition of leisure. The man fully employed may be able to gratify his good dispositions by improving himself or his neighbours, or serving the public in some useful way; but the man who has all his time to dispose of as he pleases has but a poor chance indeed of doing so. To do, increases the capacity of doing; and it is far less difficult for a man who is in an habitual course of exertion to exert himself a little more for an extra purpose, than for the man who does little or nothing to put himself into motion for the same end. This is owing to a principle of our moral nature, which is the *vis inertiae*, literally the strength of inactivity. To set a common child's hoop a-going in the first place requires a smarter stroke than to keep it in motion afterwards. There is a reluctance in all things to be set a-going; but when that is got over, then everything goes sweetly enough. Just so it is with the idle man. In losing the habit, he loses the

power of doing. But a man who is busy about some regular employment for a proper length of time every day can very easily do something else during the remaining hours; indeed, the recreation of the weary man is apt to be busier than the perpetual leisure of the idle.

PLOT AND COUNTER-PLOT.

CHAPTER XIV.

Thou art
As false, by Heaven, as Heaven itself is true.
Richard II.

ADONIA sat by an open window looking out over the sea. The chamber was small, but handsomely furnished, and a garden was connected with the house. But into that garden she had not been suffered to go. She had been many days in her present quarters, confined to the two apartments already mentioned. It was Vangorion who had lodged her there; and he had told her that she was in a villa belonging to the queen, who would speedily see her. Only the envoy and the woman who attended upon her had been admitted to her presence.

The bloom was gone from the maiden's cheek, and the joy had faded from her eyes. What fate held in store for her she knew not—she only knew that all the bright promises of the other times had been blighted, and that a thick darkness had gathered round about her. Of Julian she had heard nothing save what the envoy had told her—and he had told her—that the prince was in the hands of an imperial tribunal which would mete out to him the strictest justice. By slow degrees, in her dismal solitude, the hopes of her life had died out.

As the shades of evening gathered over the deep waters Adonia retired from the window, and reclined upon a sofa which stood near at hand. She sat there, her thoughts wandering off to the bright world of which she had promise through the Christian faith, when a door was opened, and the woman who waited upon her entered, bearing a lamp and a tray of food. This woman was called Bianca. She was past the middle age, of a strong, muscular frame, and though not positively ill-looking, she was still devoid of any of those expressions of face which denote womanly sympathy. Still at times she showed that she possessed a human heart; and there were times, too, when kindly beams were in her dull gray eyes. On the present occasion the harsh lines of her face were softened, and when Adonia saw it she ventured to speak.

"Bianca," she said, beseechingly, "will you not tell me to what end I am kept in this place?"

"Lady, I knew nothing."

"Oh, Bianca! Will you not help me? You are a woman, and—"

"Lady, you know not what you ask. I am but a bondswoman, and he is my master. If you would not make me your enemy, seek not to put my very life in peril."

Adonia sank back upon her seat, and shortly afterwards the woman left the apartment.

During that night the imprisoned maiden was visited by frightful dreams, and even after she had become fully aroused the dreadful spectres seemed to be living realities about her.

Morning came, and when she had broken her fast she went to the window and looked out upon the sea. Vessels were passing up and down the strait, and as she marked their white sails fitting across the dark background of the Italian coast she thought how blessed were those who were wafted by such wings. Away to the left, off against the northern headland of the harbour, she saw the restless, whirling waters of Charybdis, boiling and surging in never-ceasing turbulence; and farther on, towering in grim blackness over the narrow pass, she saw the Rock of Scylla, and she wondered if the fabled monster of that gloomy cavern could have been more relentless than were the powers that had laid their grasp upon herself.

She was meditating thus when she was aroused by the moving of the fastenings of her door, and presently Vangorion entered the chamber. His toga was new and of finest quality, and his under vestments were richly adorned. Adonia shrank away as he approached, for in this lordly garb he looked even more sinister than before.

"A happy morning to you, fair lady," he said.

But the maiden made no reply. Her eyes drooped before the man's evil gaze, and at length she covered her face with her hands.

"Can you not speak to me, lady? Have you no responsive words for my well-wishes?"

"Well-wishes!" repeated the shuddering girl, looking up.

"Ay, my dear—for such are all my wishes for you."

"How have you shown them, base man?" cried Adonia, impetuously.

"Hush! Accuse me not of baseness until you know more fully my purpose. Sit you down and be at ease while I tell you."

They both sat, after which the envoy proceeded: "I have shown my well-wishes in strenuous efforts for your good, and be sure to benefit you is the deepest desire of my soul. I tell you, Adonia, that but for my care you would never have passed the bounds of infancy. It was I who received you from the hands of your dying mother, and—"

"Stop, stop, false man!" interrupted Adonia. "Your story is not true. You did no such thing. My kind uncle it was who cared for me and protected me in my childhood."

"Alas! my poor child, how are you deceived!" said Vangorgon, sanctimoniously. "I know the story. You speak of an old priest of Neptune, called Erastus. But I can assure you that he is no uncle of yours. You have no such relative living. This Erastus managed to get you into his hands when you were but a mere child; but he had only the authority of a brigand. To me your mother gave you, and to her I was bound by an oath. When you were three years of age I was called unexpectedly to Rome, and I left you in charge of a female friend in whose fidelity I thought I could confide. From her you were stolen by the priest of Neptune, and he imposed upon you when he represented himself as your uncle. What his ulterior object was I cannot divine, but you may thank your stars that you are free from his wiles."

"Is not Erastus my uncle?" asked Adonia. "He is not!"

The maiden was bewildered. Not only did Vangorgon speak with an air of truth, but in her own mind there had been vague and mystic doubts concerning the white-haired priest. Yet she could not but think he was her friend.

"Have you seen Erastus of late?" she asked, after a long pause.

"I have not seen him, although I have heard that he has been lately in the city. But let him pass. He is nothing to me, and I know full well he can be no thing to you. He will never gain control over you again."

"But I should like much to see him."

"It cannot be. I shall not suffer it."

"Indeed, sir, you speak as one—"

"Who has authority," added the envoy, as the maiden hesitated beneath the strange glitter of his eyes. "So I have authority. Now, my dear child, I will communicate to you what you must have very much desired to know:—Why you have been brought hither, and why I have troubled myself so much concerning you. When I took you from your mother I gave to her a solemn promise, bound by an oath, that, if I lived, I would guard and shield you to the end—that you should become wholly mine to care for and protect, and that I would become wholly yours. The promise I have not forgotten, nor have I relinquished the bright hopes to which it gave birth. Do you understand?"

"I do not," whispered the maiden.

"It is very plain. Your mother gave you to me for my wife. Can you understand that?"

The stricken girl started from her seat as though from the shock of a thunderbolt.

"Do you understand now?" he repeated, bending towards her.

"Oh, Heaven! No, no!"

"It is as I have said. You were given to me for my wife."

"No, no! Not that! You do not mean it!"

"I was never more serious in my life, lovely maiden. I have not forgotten my promise, nor will I ever forget it. The hour of our marriage is not far distant. For this have I sought you; for this have I found you; and for this do I thus hold you."

"No, no! Oh, Vangorgon, you cannot do this!"

"Cannot do it!" repeated the envoy, with a wicked smile. "Why can I not? The hope of possessing you for my wife has been the one great thought of my life."

"But you will have mercy?"

"Beware, Adonia! Remember what is to come. Do not seek to embitter the heart of him who is to be your husband."

"Never, never!" cried the maiden. "It shall not be! It is impious in the sight of Heaven!"

"Girl, listen to me, and be sure I speak only words of truth and soberness. Since you were an infant you have been mine; and though there were years succeeding in which you were wrested from me, my right to the ownership did not cease. At length I found you again, and in right you are mine. During all these years I have looked forward to the time when I could call you my wife with more of longing than I can tell. To regain you I have suffered much; and now that I have you safe I will keep you. The king and the queen know the story, and support my claim. You speak of mercy. I tell you, girl, sooner

than give over the plan of making you my wife I would relinquish every other boon of earth."

"Vangorgon, have you in your bosom a spark of kindly feeling left? Is there one throb of sympathy or of justice?"

"Kindly feeling I have in abundance, sweet girl, or I could not love you as I do."

"Girl! we have had enough of this. You have heard my purpose, know that it is as unalterable as are the laws of the Medes and Persians. If you choose to stand bravely up, I will help you; but though you were dying, and I knew that the marriage would kill you, I would yet make you my wife! Do you understand me now?"

She understood. Her brain reeled, and she would have sunk upon the floor had he not caught her. He was upon the point of summoning Bianca, when a rap upon the door was followed by her entrance.

"Ah, Bianca, you are in season. Here is work for you. Be not alarmed. The girl has only fainted from over-excitement." Then, remembering that the woman had come without being summoned, he said: "You were not listening, Bianca?"

"No, my lord. I brought you a message."

"Ah! From whom?"

"It is this."

She placed in his hand the signet of the queen.

He took it; and when he had given directions concerning the treatment of the fainting maiden, he hurried from the apartment.

CHAPTER XV.

All orators are dumb when beauty pleadeth.

Shakespeare.

UNDER the careful nursing of Bianca, Adonia soon regained her consciousness, though through the day she kept her bed most of the time. Her first wish, upon the return of sense, was that she might never have come back to earthly life. She remembered the speech of Vangorgon—she recalled every look and tone—and she knew that he had but spoken his unalterable purpose. Furthermore, she felt that she was completely in his power. It seemed that only a miracle could interpose to save her.

She had no hope anywhere! All was against her; and the fate which now put forth its hand to grasp her was more dreadful than any of which she had ever before conceived.

As evening approached she arose and assumed her outer robe, arranged her flowing tresses, and partook of light refreshment which Bianca had prepared. She had finished the repast, and had risen and moved to the open window, when the creaking of a door aroused her, and upon turning she beheld Vangorgon, who had entered the apartment.

"Lady," said Vangorgon, "I am come upon an important errand." There was a slight faltering in his voice, and a shadow of trouble was upon his brow; but he put away outward show of the feeling as he concluded: "I have come from her majesty the queen. She would see you."

"The queen!" repeated the maiden, with a start.

"The queen," explained Vangorgon. "I will conduct you to her."

Octavia was alone in one of her private apartments, standing within the light of a hanging lamp. She was thinking of the plans she had laid, and of the consummation which was at hand. She was not wholly sure of her son. With all her powers of education and example she had not been able wholly to destroy his conscience—a characteristic which he had inherited from his father. There was one other thing; Glaucus had a wife of his own—the fair and youthful Myrina of Palermo—to whom he had been married a year. In name Myrina was queen of Messina; but it was in name only, for Octavia, when she resigned the sceptre of the monarch into the hands of her son, did not relinquish her place as queen; and when, afterwards, the son married, she spoke of the young wife's inexperience, and offered to hold her place in the government. This offer was a declaration of intent, and both Glaucus and Myrina so understood it; and for the sake of peace the ambitious woman was suffered to have her way without opposition.

So Octavia held in reality queenly power; yet the wife of the king wielded an influence of which she was afraid—an influence gentle, loving, and kind. This it was which particularly disturbed the queen. Under that influence Glaucus was shrinking from the work he had promised to do, and was begging that good men might be spared.

"Fool!" she had said to him; "if we spare the men whom you deem good, the chief among the Christians will all cease."

Octavia stood thus when she heard a tap upon her door. She listened until the tap had been repeated four times, then she bade the applicant to enter.

In answer to her bidding Vangorgon appeared, leading by the hand Adonia.

"So you have brought her at last," said Octavia, when she saw the envoy's companion.

She then turned to the maiden, who she saw was trembling violently.

"You have naught to fear in this place, my child. I sent for you but from curiosity. Our friend Vangorgon has informed me that you are of Faleri, one of the old patrician stock. In all that pertains to that country I feel a deep interest, it being my own birthplace. Turn your face and let me look at you."

Adonia raised her head, and as the soft light of the suspended lamp fell upon her face it revealed a beauty little less than celestial. The strangeness of the maiden's situation—the presence of royalty—the kindly speech of the queen—had sent new pulsations to her heart, and called a delicate tinge to her cheeks. Her glossy tresses hung in rich profusion over her pure white shoulders; her brow was clear and placid; and her azure eyes were as depths of ethereal light, soft and sublime.

Octavia started with a strange thrill when she beheld the face, and as she gazed upon it she moved nearer.

"Is your name Adonia?" she asked.

"It is," the maiden answered.

"Was your father's name Romano?"

"So I have been informed, royal lady."

The queen gazed yet a while longer upon that beautiful face as though spellbound, then turned to the envoy.

"Vangorgon," she said, "I have carefully examined the roll of senators of Titus's reign, and I find only one Romano set down. Him I know, and he had no wife. He died young."

A momentary shadow was upon the envoy's face, but the trouble was quickly thrown off.

"Remember," he said, with a smile, "that I received the child from the hands of its mother, and that from her lips I heard the story. If she kept anything from me I am not responsible. She may have been Romano's bondwoman."

Again Octavia turned and gazed into the face of the beautiful girl. She was strangely moved, and did not seek to hide it.

"My child, what can you tell me of your parents?"

"Nothing, royal lady. I only hold in memory that which has been told to me by others."

"And you, Vangorgon—what do you know?"

"Only as I have already told you."

"You said her mother died here in Messina?"

"Yes. She had come hither from Rome, forced to flee from the capital by troubles which had resulted in Romano's death. Of her private history she did not tell me, and I did not ask her."

"By my life!" the queen uttered, turning her gaze again upon the maiden, "your face appears like one I have known in other years. I am not apt to forget, but I cannot call to mind that other face of which yours seems the reflection."

"Royal lady," said Vangorgon. "This girl, if I remember rightly, wears a face much like that which her mother wore; and it is not impossible that the mother may have been known to you. You may have seen her many times in Rome."

Octavia cast upon the envoy a look of doubt; but before she could make further remark the door was unceremoniously opened, and the king entered.

"Ha!—Glaucus!" she cried, with a flush of displeasure. "I did not send for you."

"I am well aware of that, most royal mother; but I wished to see you, and I took the most direct method of arriving in your presence. These are times when we stand not upon ceremonies—times when we cannot—Ha!—Whom have we here?"

Adonia looked up as the king uttered the exclamation, and he saluted her respectfully. At first he had only seen that she was a stranger, but when he had gazed more carefully, and had caught a full view of the sweet, pale face, he started, as his mother had started, and took a step nearer. His gaze was rapt, and he stood like one entranced.

"Mother, who is this?" he said.

"She is the girl of whom you have heard us speak—the ward of Vangorgon."

"But—but—what else? She is more than that?"

Octavia did not answer, and Glaucus turned again to the maiden.

"Fair lady, who are you? Where have we met?"

"We have met never before," replied Adonia, dropping her eyes before his searching gaze.

"Be not too sure, lady. By my life! such a face as yours is not seen so often that we should be confounded by counterfeits. Mother, will you explain it?"

"I cannot explain it to myself," said Octavia, slowly shaking her head; "nor can the maiden herself give us any clue."

"How is it with Vangorgon?" queried Glaucus, turning to the envoy.

"I can make nothing of it, sire—nothing at all."

"Never mind, sweet lady," the king said. "We

will look farther into this enigma at another time. Fear not. If you are ever in trouble, count Glaucus of Messina as your friend. Now, my mother," he added, turning as he spoke, "I would speak with you alone."

"We will withdraw," said Vangorion, taking Adonia by the hand, and starting hurriedly for the door.

"Stop, stop, sir envoy. You need not fear that we shall rob you of your prize; but we would keep the maiden here for a season. My child, have you any objections to remaining in the palace?"

Vangorion tried to catch her eye, to impress upon her the direful threat which he dared not speak; but she did not look at him. She replied to the queen:

"Let me remain here, royal lady."

"You shall remain in safety," said the king, who had marked the envoy's angry manner, and who liked it not.

"Let her return with me," pleaded Vangorion.

Then he put forth his hand to take her by the arm. But Adonia, with a shudder, shrank from his touch, and crept to the side of the king. It was a strange movement—the crouching of the maiden by the side of the youthful monarch—but she made it instinctively, nor thought it wrong. She laid her hand upon his arm, and gazed imploringly up into his face. Glaucus felt a keen, grateful thrill to the very centre of his being as he met the prayerful gaze of those upturned eyes, and the emotion thus awakened was of the nobler instincts of his nature. He passed his arm around her waist, and drew her closely to him.

"Do not let him take me away!" she whispered.

"Fear not," the king replied, in the same low tone.

Vangorion turned to the queen.

"Let her go with me. I ask it most earnestly. You shall see her again if you so desire. Remember the work we have in hand, your majesty, and let not this thing make dangerous delay!"

He spoke these last words with significant emphasis, and he saw from the queen's manner that he had made the desired impression.

"At this time," he continued, "I would not have my attention distracted from our sacred purpose. I have told you truly concerning the girl, and I can only feel safe while she is wholly under my care. Let me hope that your gracious majesty will suffer me to continue my guardianship."

"Well, well," said Octavia, "since you take it so much to heart, your request is granted. You may take the maiden."

"Thanks, royal lady—thanks."

Having thus expressed himself, the envoy turned towards Adonia; but she clung more closely to the king, trembling like a frightened bird.

"This fair lady is under my care at present," said Glaucus, with calm and lordly assurance.

"How?" gasped Vangorion, aghast. "Sir, you would not thwart me?"

Instead of replying in words the king turned to where a bell-cord hung suspended near him, and gave it three distinct pulls. This was his signal in distinction from his mother's.

A page immediately entered the apartment.

"Hafed," said the monarch, "conduct this lady to my queen, and bid her that she give her kindly shelter."

Then turning to Adonia, he added:

"Gentle lady, with Myrina you will be safe and well cared for. She is a good and true woman, and I think you will love her. Go, now, and be in peace."

"Glaucus!" cried the queen, in mingled surprise and anger, "do you know what you are doing?"

"Ay—I know," replied the king, composedly.

"Then what means this strange movement? Let the maiden go with her proper protector."

"My wife shall be her protector until I have solved the strange enigma which you and I have seen in her face. She will be safe, fear not."

"Glaucus, you will not cross me?" Octavia whispered through her clenched teeth.

"My mother, beware that you do not cross me!—Hafed, take the lady, and go."

Vangorion started forward, and put forth his hand towards the maiden as though he would have seized her. Adonia saw his movement, and would have clung again to the king; but Glaucus had also seen the movement, and with his own hand he led her to the door and dismissed her. Then he faced the envoy.

"Vangorion," he said, with quivering lip and flashing eye, "I trust that you will not be the first man to fall beneath the hand of the king. If you would save your head, beware how you offend me. Now, Vangorion, your presence can be dispensed with. Remember, we mean to deprive you of no just right. You can go!"

There was that in the look of the monarch which told of a determination not to be bent, and of a spirit that might not be tempted with impunity. The envoy struggled for a brief space with his consuming passion, and turned silently away and left the room.

"Glaucus," said the queen, when the door had closed upon the envoy, "you are most unwise."

"I must see more of this girl before she goes back into the envoy's clutches. There is something wondrously familiar in her face. If I never saw her before, then I have seen her counterpart. Did she not affect you in like manner?"

"She did," replied Octavia, who had forgotten her anger in memory of the strange emotions which the sweet face of Adonia had called up in her bosom.

"You know the true character of this scheming envoy as well as I do," pursued Glaucus. "It is written in his every look and act. I firmly believe that this girl is the child of some noble house whom he has by means of villany gained into his possession; and it is his purpose that she shall yield to him profit of either wealth or power. At all events, I will solve the enigma if I can; and to that end will I hold the maiden. Now, my mother, passing from this, let us come to the other matter." The king shuddered as he thus spoke, while the eyes of his mother gleamed with more eager fire. "The hours are passing, and the season of the fell stroke draws nigh. What has been done?"

"All—all, my son."

"Sit you down, my mother, and tell me."

Octavia sat down and unfolded to her son the plan which had been perfected for the massacre of the Christians. He listened until his heart ached with the burden thus cast upon it; and when the story had been told he arose and paced up and down the room. His mother watched him for a time in silence, and at length she said:

"What think you of the plan, my son?"

"What plan?" he asked, with a start.

"For the sweeping away of the Christians."

"I was not thinking of that. A theme far more pleasant occupied my thoughts."

"How?"

"I was thinking of the strange mystery that had come to us in the sweet face of Adonia."

(To be continued.)

HOW DID LADY NEVILLE DIE?

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Unloved Wife," "The Curse of Everleigh," &c.

CHAPTER XXI.

Where we are there's daggers in men's smiles.

Macbeth.

SIR ANGUS was like a madman at first. The shock and surprise were so terrible. He fought and struggled against his captors desperately. But they were too many and too strong for him. He was soon mastered, and borne away in a cab, livid with rage, and gnashing his strong white teeth.

He grew calmer presently, and asked one of the men if he knew whether Lady Saville was in town.

He half feared the man was going to tell him Audrey was dead, and waited in a suspense of agony as he hesitated.

The man answered at last.

Lady Saville was not in town. She had gone with Lord Neville and his aunt to one of his lordship's country seats.

"Lord Neville?" said Sir Angus, inquiringly.

"He's playing sharp," remarked one of the other policemen, knowingly; "pretending he don't know Lord Neville is his old friend, Mr. Claude Revere."

Sir Angus turned cold. If he had ever really experienced the pangs of jealousy in connection with his beautiful Audrey, they had been on Claude Revere's account; and here was he become a lord, and she visiting at his country seat at such a time as this.

He turned to the man who had first answered him. "I don't know and cannot imagine how Mr. Claude Revere has become Lord Neville," he said; and something in that haughty young face touched the soul he questioned.

"You are Sir Angus Saville?" the man asked, respectfully, with an accent of surprise and compassion.

"You have arrested me as captain of the Twelve."

Sir Angus answered, with a sad and scornful smile.

"Yes, I am Sir Angus Saville."

"Then you are Lord Neville's cousin."

Sir Angus stared, then he laughed bitterly.

"Not I. Claude Revere, or Lord Neville, he is no cousin of mine."

"And madame, your mother?"

"Madame who?" almost shouted Sir Angus, in his surprise.

"Madame Revere."

"I don't know what you are talking about," the

young man said, contemptuously. "Will you tell me what day of the month this is?"

"It is the fourteenth of September."

Sir Angus turned and looked at him as though he doubted if he spoke in earnest.

"Do you mean what you say?"

"Certainly I do. It is the fourteenth day of September."

Sir Angus's pale face grew a shade whiter.

"See here, my friend," he said, "far from being a captain of the Twelve, I believe I have been the victim—the prisoner—of that infamous band for the last three months. I am no more one of them than you are. I have been, as it were, buried for three months. Will you kindly tell me what has happened in that time—to Lady Saville, I mean?"

The man looked away. He believed his prisoner to be a villain. The papers had been full of ugly rumours concerning him during the late great Neville investigation; but it was such an interesting young face—so handsome, high-bred, and sad, that in a sort of vague sympathy he answered him.

"I don't know much myself. I'll get you the late papers if you like. They'll tell you, maybe."

At the station-house Sir Angus was searched, submitting to the indignity with white and quivering lips, which had remonstrated in vain.

But as the search brought to light some very singular articles to be found in a gentleman's pocket, and as these were evidently portions of a rogue's kit, his indignant assertion of innocence, his strange explanation of how he came by the garments in which the suspicious articles were found went for little.

His account, too, of his abduction, the drugged wine, the escape and recapture, all sounded too improbable for belief.

At the examination before the magistrate appeared Sir Charles Rutger, and Mr. Norris, both gentlemen of undoubted position, and identified the prisoner as one of six who had waylaid and robbed them six weeks before, a few miles out of London. One of them had given the notorious chief of the Twelve a flesh-wound on the temple, and torn off his mask.

Both swore to the wound, the scar of which was yet discernible, and a crape mask was among the things found in searching the unfortunate Sir Angus.

The unhappy young man stood overpowered with anguish and amazement.

"Am I dreaming or mad?" he ejaculated at last.

"I think you are neither," the magistrate said, with angry dignity; "though you and your associates have baffled English justice so long, it is, perhaps, not singular that you are overcome at even a foretaste of it."

Sir Angus turned a heavy look on him.

"Can I send a letter to my wife—Lady Saville—whom I have not seen for three months?"

"You can send a letter; but unless Lady Saville has less spirit than I imagine, your letter will come back to you unopened, as such an insult should."

Sir Angus fairly gasped for breath at this thrust. Then he drew himself up with a certain knightly air, and his dark eye flashed as he said:

"I don't think it will come back to me, sir. With your permission I will write."

He was remanded for trial, and in the interval had ample time and opportunity to possess himself through the public prints of the details of one of the most exciting stories that had warmed the soul of public gossip for years. He thus learned for the first time the romantic fact of the theft of the two children from Neville House, and that he himself was one of them. Also that Madame Revere claimed to be his mother. As he read on, cold beads of perspiration broke forth upon his white brow, and a chilly horror seemed to possess him.

He saw himself stripped of friends, belied and made outcast, without the chance to say a word in self-defence. He saw himself a criminal, prejudged, and condemned, with the life of a convict facing him inevitably, unless a merciful Heaven interferred to save him from his enemies. As he beheld himself blackened and calumniated on every hand, as he searched in vain among the papers he had brought to him for one line in his defence, as the days wore on and brought neither Lady Audrey nor a word from her, rage, horror, and despair, in turn, took possession of his soul.

It was a week before he could calm himself enough to sift the newspaper stories, and extract the main facts in their proper connection. But when it was done, it was like having the key to a terrible riddle, and his gloomy eye lighted, and his heart throbbed wildly with a desperate hope.

"I believe I could beat these villains at their own game," he said, setting his teeth firmly.

After carefully reviewing the whole of this gigantic mystery, which had in three short months bereft him of fortune, wife, and friends, and cast him into prison

upon a vile and criminal accusation, Sir Angus succeeded in separating the one great problem into four complications, as follows:

First Tangle.—Lady Audrey Saville was—according to the papers and Madame Revere—an heiress, left a ward of Salaris Vivian, who had wickedly appropriated her inheritance to his own uses, and when threatened with discovery and punishment had entered into a conspiracy with his adopted son, Sir Angus Saville, to marry the wronged girl, secure her fortune, then disgrace her and divorce her, that they might divide the money between them, and Sir Angus marry another woman.

Second Tangle.—More than twenty-one years before, a woman called Felice Delon, had—according to the papers and Madame again—partly for purposes of revenge, partly with the hope of aggrandising herself in the future, stolen from Neville House the infant heir of Neville, and Madame Revere's child, also a babe.

Four years after this theft, when the children had grown beyond the positive recognition as it was supposed even of a mother, Felice had mysteriously conveyed to Madame a child which she was led to believe was her son.

Twenty-one years later, he who was really her son, having had the truth revealed to him by Felice in a moment of remorse, had bribed the woman to silence, and presented himself to his mother with the proposition that she should swear to his identity as her nephew, the long-missing Lord of Neville, and so assist him to obtain possession of the title and estate.

Madame's lofty soul rejected so base a proposal with scorn, and her joy at finding her own son was turned to anguish at the discovery of his false and ignoble nature.

Then, suspecting that he who passed as her son—Claude Revere—was the true heir, she taxed Felice with the fact, and obtained an acknowledgment to that effect.

To a soul like Madame's concealment of the truth now was impossible, and accordingly she revealed all to Claude, who thereupon entered at once upon the necessary legal steps to secure his own.

The woman Felice having been compelled to testify, and Madame having sworn that she had always known that Claude was not her son, and that she had at once identified Sir Angus as such by a birth-mark on his left arm, the rest was easy.

Claude Revere had become Lord Neville without contest, and taken possession of the immense rents, and the enormous accumulated revenues of the same. He had become, from a private individual, a peer of the realm and the richest man in the three kingdoms.

Third Tangle.—Lord Neville had behaved with the utmost generosity, declining to pursue or prosecute his cousin Sir Angus, protecting and caring for his innocent wife, when her husband forsook her, and appropriating at once a magnificent income to his aunt—Madame Revere.

The newspapers of the day succeeding Sir Angus's arrest spoke of Lord Neville, Madame Revere, and Lady Saville in terms of deep sympathy and compassion, alluding to the husband of the last as having been discovered to be the captain of the Fatal Twelve, in whose haunts he had been lurking during the past three months, instead of having fled the country as had been supposed.

Sir Angus placed under the head of each complication the false statements it contained to his knowledge as follows:

Falsehoods in the first tangle.—Lady Audrey Saville was Salaris Vivian's own daughter; therefore she could not have been an heiress and his ward, and he could not have appropriated her inheritance.

There had been no conspiracy between him and his adopted son Sir Angus. He had in fact been displeased at the marriage. Sir Angus worshipped his wife, and, far from conspiring at her disgrace, would have staked his life on her truth.

Sir Angus had never entertained even a passing fancy for any woman but the one he had married, and if fate had deprived him of her, the face of woman would have become hateful to him.

Falsehoods in the second tangle.—Felice Delon had never revealed to Sir Angus under any circumstances that he was one of the children stolen from Neville House. He had never bribed her to conceal such a fact, and had never made any proposition or revelation whatever to Madame Revere. Hence she could not have rejected such, or been overcome with anguish at the infancy of one she was strongly ready to believe, if he was her son.

Sir Angus had a birth-mark on his left arm, and Madame had seen and testified some emotion at sight of it, he had imagined, at his one interview with her, but she had assured him coldly immediately afterwards that she was in complete ignorance as to his birth or parentage.

Falsehoods in third tangle.—Lady Saville's husband had not forsaken her, and having no occasion

to prosecute Sir Angus, Lord Neville had shown no generosity in abstaining from doing so.

Suspicious circumstances.—First. Felice Delon, the woman alleged to have stolen the two children from Neville House, was Madame Revere's maid, and still remained with Madame.

Second. Lord Neville, far from according to the man he called his cousin even the charity of silence, had traduced him to the public ear in the most infamous manner.

Third. Madame Revere, who pretended that Sir Angus was her son, had proved herself his bitterest enemy, and was enjoying a magnificent income from the man she had sworn was her nephew, while he whom she called son languished in prison under a criminal accusation.

Sir Angus pondered these circumstances, and paced his prison in an excitement of surmises which were too near the truth to be trusted to the enemy his lawyer secretly was, for Lord Neville had the man already in his pay, and the shrewd suspicions which Sir Angus had arrived at only sealed his fate the more inevitably. For every reason now Claude, the false lord, would never dare let Sir Angus escape the doom he had prepared for him.

Sir Angus once fully alive to the peril of his position had lost no time in securing counsel. His lawyer, a young and rising man, had at first displayed great zeal and promptness in working up his case. It was he who had discovered that Felice, far from having been sent away in disgrace as would have seemed natural, was a greater favourite than ever with Madame Revere.

"It is true that Salaris the Jew has disappeared," this man said to Sir Angus. "His magnificent house is closed, though I am told it will be re-opened soon for the occupancy of Lady Saville."

Sir Angus's melancholy face lighted.

"You must see my wife, Upden," he said, "and beseech her to come to me. She has never been allowed to receive my letters, depend upon it; and it may be in her power to give us important information."

The following week the lawyer brought word that he had seen a superb carriage in front of the residence formerly known as that of Salaris.

"Lady Saville has doubtless arrived, and I will call immediately upon her with your permission."

"By all means," exclaimed Sir Angus, eagerly.

"Why did you wait?"

"You forget that I am a stranger to her ladyship."

"And you require a line from me. That is true. Here it is. Now fly, my only friend."

Sir Angus spoke with indescribable emotion, and awaited the return of the lawyer in a state of mind that can be imagined.

He walked the floor of his cell constantly, and by the time Upden had returned had worked himself into such a fever of excitement that he could scarcely speak.

"Lady Saville declined positively to see me," Upden announced, without looking at Sir Angus.

The young man sank upon a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

Presently he lifted his head again, and, though his face was frightfully pale, his trembling lips were smiling.

"It was not she who refused to see you," he said, in accents of conviction; "others did that in her name. Madame Revere, without doubt, is with her. You must watch for her when she goes out to drive, my faithful Upden, and make bold to approach her carriage. I am satisfied in my own mind that she is either compulsorily detained from me, or else is kept in ignorance of my situation."

Upden smiled, but in a manner to fill the soul of the still-trusting husband with frightful misgivings; but he promised to endeavour to see Lady Saville as proposed. He indeed made ostentatious pretence of going to the park to watch for Lady Audrey on the fashionable drive.

Little did his miserable and tortured young client suspect how falsely he spoke when he repeated over and over again that Lady Saville had not made her appearance yet. He saw her nearly every day.

CHAPTER XXII.

And many strokes, though with a little axe,
Hew down and fell the hardest-timbered oak.

3 Henry VI.

THE anxiety and suspense, the harrowing doubts and suspicions that would intrude themselves, were upon Sir Angus horribly. He scarcely ate, drank, or slept. His eyes were like nearly burned-out fires, with watching for her who did not come. A sickly and fatal despair began to creep over him. He ceased to discuss the probabilities of the coming trial with his lawyer. He seemed even to have yielded to the most unhappy forebodings concerning its results, to succumb to his fate as it were. One day Upden came into Sir Angus's cell with a look of

studied gloom, and sat down, casting compassionate glances at his client.

Sir Angus sprang to a rapid conclusion.

"You have seen her at last!" he cried.

"Yea," Upden took his hand. "She is not worthy of you, my boy."

The proud and sensitive young lips quivered.

"Tell me," he gasped, a feverish, hectic flush rising in his wan cheek.

"She knows everything, and leaves you to your fate," spoke Upden, in a low voice, averting his face, over which was creeping the crimson hue of shame.

Sir Angus cried out, in a ringing, angry voice:

"I will never believe it! Tell me her words. Her exact words."

"She closed my lips before I could utter a syllable. 'You come to me from Sir Angus,' she said; 'I decline to hear one word; I have no husband.'"

Sir Angus did not speak again. There was a strange quietude in his manner from that hour. He never mentioned his wife again to Upden.

Soon now his trial came on.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the details of this trial, though it was far from uninteresting, being the great sensation of the day.

The prisoner was young and handsome. He looked like a banished prince, as he sat there erect and tall, his gloomy eyes set in a strange stare that few understood, because they did not know that he had just met the woman he adored, smiling in the face of the man he hated, and turning with a shudder of terror and abhorrence from him.

The prisoner was a nobleman, the cousin of a nobleman, and was charged with being a leader of that most mysterious and terrible band of robbers, the Fatal Twelve. No wonder the court and the streets outside were crammed with excited people, crowding and pushing for a sight of so interesting and terrible a man.

Sir Angus sat through it like a statue carved in stone. A gray pallor had overspread his manly and intelligent face, and his fine eyes were set and cold like those of one in a trance.

Only when the verdict was rendered, a violent trembling seized him, and an unearthly fire seemed to light in his large, dark, and gloomy eyes. He turned his glance upon the judge as he rose to pronounce sentence.

Death to this wretched man would have been well come. But it had not been proved that he had ever taken life, so, desperate villain as he was supposed to be, his sentence was only penal servitude for life.

The judge stood a full minute after he had pronounced sentence, expecting the condemned man to speak, and watching the vivid contraction of his features in a species of fascination.

"There is no eternal justice, since such monstrous wickedness is permitted to triumph, and the innocent are left to perish," Sir Angus said, lifting his hands, and seeming to hurl curses with them.

Then he fell back like a corpse, and was removed by the officers of the court.

A man who, mounted on a blood-horse of remarkable swiftness, had been waiting since the opening of the trial, wheeled his animal at the first announcement of the verdict, and the crowd, giving way but slowly before even those trampling hoofs, he was still struggling to get free when the prisoner came forth, half-led, half-supported, by a police-officer.

This man, who was Vance, Lord Neville's valet and confidential servant, glanced askance at the prisoner, whom a certain air of grandeur still distinguished, notwithstanding his fallen state and ghastly look.

"Poor fellow," he whispered to himself, with a grain of compassion; "I wonder what he would make it worth to me to tell him the truth."

Then, finding himself on the outskirts of the crowd, he set spurs to his horse and never stopped again till he came to that magnificent mansion which had belonged to Salaris, but which was inhabited now by those whom alone in the whole world he had reason to consider his bitter enemies. Lady Audrey Saville was nominally the mistress of this palatial residence, but she usually remained in her own apartments. Madame Revere, and he whom she now called her beloved nephew, Lord Neville, ruled everywhere else, and ordered everything as they chose.

Madame's boudoir was a miracle of art and beauty, and Madame herself sat in it, arrayed like a queen, when Vance was announced.

Lord Neville, who was with her, started up from a velvet-covered chair to go and meet his messenger, then, bethinking himself, sat down again and waited for him.

"Well?" he questioned, with hoarse impatience.

"Convicted, my lord," Vance said, in a low voice. "Sentenced to penal servitude for life."

Madame had the grace to cover her face with her lace handkerchief, and pretend to sob.

Vance withdrew after a pause. Then madame uncovered her face, and Lord Neville turned round.

Silently they looked at each other. Madame's eyes fell first, and a singular pallor crept over her beautiful face.

"You are pale, madame," Claude said, with a faint sneer.

"I was thinking," madame said, in a scarcely audible voice, "how terrible it would be if he who has just been sentenced to penal servitude for life, partially through my instrumentality, were indeed my son."

Lord Neville frowned angrily.

"Madame, you are fanciful," he said; "come, take my arm, and let me conduct you to Lady Audrey's apartments."

Madame Revere accepted his arm in silence. By the time they reached the entrance of Lady Audrey's boudoir, her shaken composure had returned to her. Lady Audrey's apartments were more simply but quite as elegantly furnished as Madame Revere's.

Lady Audrey had changed much since that evening when her devoted young husband had taken the drugged wine from her little hand.

A remarkable transparency and delicacy had taken the place of that brilliant colour for which her ladyship had been noted. She seemed to have grown slight and tall, and the large, dark, melting eyes no longer sparkled with vivacity or flashed with emotion.

She wore a robe of azure silk, whose hue added to the ethereal nature of her appearance. She had never looked more angelic in the eyes of the few men whose one unselfish passion was his love for her.

His first words on entering showed how their relations had changed since he saw them together in Lady Saville's drawing-room, in St. James's Square.

"My dear Audrey," said the young man, advancing eagerly to her side, and taking her little stony fingers in his own, while his eyes met hers with the most reverential tenderness, "are you feeling well this afternoon? I am sure your look better every day."

"I am very well, my lord," she said, with a smile of indescribable sweetness, but her large eyes retained their pensive expression.

"Are you well enough to hear a piece of news which will afflict your tender heart, but which it is necessary you should hear from those who love you first?"

The soft, bright eyes watched him with languid inquiry, the small, proud head slightly bent.

"Sir Angus Saville is convicted and sentenced. He will never trouble you more," Lord Neville said, watching her with a thrilling gaze, and still holding the little white hand firmly in his.

A long, tremulous sigh struggled up from Audrey's bosom.

"I am sorry for him," she said, in a low voice.

"Ought I to go and see him?"

"Would you like to do so?"

"Not if I could be spared such a duty by another going in my place."

Claude's handsome face, which had expressed a momentary terror, lighted at once.

"Dear Audrey, I will go if you will permit me."

"I shall be but too greatly obliged, my lord," Lady Audrey answered, calmly, then, withdrawing her hand, which Lord Neville had retained, her pensive eyes sought Madame Revere, who came forward with her handkerchief to her face, and sat down near Lady Audrey.

Lord Neville at once quitted the room.

It is perhaps needless to say that he did not go near Sir Angus, though he pretended to do so.

That night a sealed letter was brought to Sir Angus. The jailer had been heavily bribed to deliver it. It contained only these words:

"Wickedness shall not always triumph, nor the innocent perish. Repent, my son, and Heaven, whose justice thou hast dared impugn, may yet forgive thee."

Sir Angus glanced at the words without their meaning penetrating his for the time stunned brain. One only thought was burning in his soul, one memory alone remained to him. The wife he worshipped had denied him. What remained?

But he folded the letter again, mechanically, and hid it in his bosom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

And must I reveal out
My weaved-up follies? Richard II.

MADAME REVERE affected a great attachment to Lady Audrey. In proof thereof she had transferred her own maid Felice to her. If Felice was in reality a spy upon my lady, she officiated in that capacity quite innocently so far as Audrey was concerned.

Six months passed—a year, and in all that time the vigilance of Felice, of madame, of Lord Neville, had not once relaxed; but Lady Audrey seemed un-

conscious of it. Steps had been rapidly taken to secure her a divorce from her unhappy husband, and so great was the sympathy in her behalf, so glaring the offences of Sir Angus not merely against society but herself, that it seemed a doubt could not exist as to the result.

Lord Neville waited patiently and fondly, well satisfied that the bride he awaited would repay all and any delay.

Lady Audrey refused to quit Salaris's house, therefore Madame Revere and his lordship remained there with her. It had been a year of seclusion from society to all three.

Madame Revere and Lord Neville chanced both to be out at the same time one day. It was the first time in twelve months that Lady Audrey had been so nearly alone. Felice remained, to be sure, but Felice was only a servant, and could not well accompany her mistress should she take a fancy to ride or walk out as she did.

At eleven o'clock Lady Saville rang her bell, and ordered her carriage.

Felice actually turned pale—it was so unusual that her mistress should propose to ride without being urged.

Felice ventured to suggest that madame had gone out. Would my lady wait her return?

"Certainly not."

Felice remonstrated. She had done so sometimes. Lady Saville silenced her with an imperious look, the slight alteration calling an unusual colour into her lovely, wan cheeks.

Lady Saville sat alone upon the velvet cushions of her elegant barouche that day, and many a fascinated and enraptured eye watched the beautiful girl, whose all knew as worse than widowed, as she slowly traversed the length of the Row with that preoccupied expression in the dark, liquid orbs that dwelt on no face of them all cordially.

Arrived at the termination of the park, her coachman driving slowly, Audrey took from the folds of her dress a tiny note which was concealed there, and glanced at it. It contained the following words:

"In the name of that Heaven which is the incarnation of justice, and whose eye is never closed, Lady Saville is entreated to be in the park at twelve the first day she can be there with no other company than her coachman. At the boundary an old man will ask alms, and make a request of her. If she hopes for an opportunity to redeem the past, let her comply with this request. If she refuses to come, one soul shall spend the few days left him this side of eternity in praying for justice to that Heaven which is a rewarder of the evil as well as the good."

Lady Audrey's dark eyes rested on these words with a trifle less than their usual apathy, and, as her carriage rolled smoothly along, she even glanced with languid curiosity this way and that as if in search of some one.

Suddenly she signalled the coachman to stop. She saw an old man standing under a chestnut tree by the road. He was bent and wrinkled, and he hobbled towards her eagerly, his old hat extended in his shaking hands.

Lady Saville dropped a piece of gold in it.

A pair of piercing black eyes were lifted to her face.

"Are you Lady Saville?" a voice still mellow and musical asked.

"I am."

"Then you have a gentle heart, and will not refuse the prayer of a dying woman who loves you."

Lady Saville smiled incredulously.

"I doubt that any love me," she said; "but I am curious. I will go."

The old man, with an agility that would scarce have been expected of him, mounted beside the coachman at Lady Audrey's order, and, having given him an address, the carriage rolled swiftly on.

When it stopped, Lady Saville, without an instant's hesitation, followed the old man within. It was in a dingy but respectable quarter.

They mounted one flight of well-worn steps, and entered a room entirely bare of furniture. Crossing this, the old man stopped at a door and said:

"Come in."

Lady Audrey obeyed, and he closed and bolted the door behind them.

"There is no sick woman then?" Lady Audrey said, with a lift of her eyebrows as her glance swept the room. "But I did not expect there was one."

Her companion drew his bent form erect, took off a wig of long white hair, and fixing a keen and penetrating glance upon her asked:

"Do you know me?"

Lady Saville shook her head. The man watched her narrowly.

"I am Zeno, Salaris's confidential servant. Now do you know me?"

Lady Saville shook her head again.

"My lady," he said, in a voice of agony, "try to

remember me; so much depends upon it—your own happiness, and the lives of those who love you, and to whom you owe love—Salaris, Lettice, your husband."

"I owe them nothing," Lady Audrey answered, in a tranquil voice. "I have even forgiven them my wrongs."

"Your wrongs, my lady? Will you tell me what they were?" the man said, with an evident attempt to be patient.

"I don't know why I should not. Salaris stole my inheritance, and Lettice was hired to keep me out of the way of knowing or claiming my rights. When there arose a probability of me coming for my own and making them trouble, Sir Angus was sent to marry me and secure the property. I believe the intention was to disgrace me—ruin me—that Sir Angus might be divorced and marry another woman."

It is impossible to give a just idea of the cold, still scorn with which Audrey spoke. Zeno watched the pale, haughty face of the peerless girl in an anguish that beaded his forehead with great drops of moisture.

"My lady," said Zeno, most solemnly, "some one has spoken falsely to you. There is not one grain of truth in all that you have just said. Salaris is your father; Lettice is his wife, and your mother; and Sir Angus not only worships you, but is incapable of a dishonourable action."

"What you tell me is impossible," said Audrey.

"Impossible?" cried Zeno, lifting his hands and eyes upwards. "Heaven hear her! My lady, this moment your husband languishes in the dungeon to which he has been consigned by these very people who believe me to you. Your father, your mother—Heaven alone knows what has been done with them!"

His earnestness, the solemnity and profound sorrow of his manner, impressed Audrey.

"Do you say your name is Zeno?" she asked, presently.

"Oh, my lady!" cried the man, "I was head footman at the house of Salaris, my master, and your father. I have a sacred, a solemn message to you from your father. Try to remember me, my lady—do try to remember me!"

"I want to tell you something, Zeno. I meet people every day who seem surprised when I do not remember them. Madame tells me I was very ill about a year ago, and that my memory was affected by that illness."

Zeno started.

"I have heard of such things," he said, wonderingly. "But surely you remember your husband—your father Salaris?"

Lady Audrey burst into tears.

"I remember my Scottish hills. I remember my husband when he came wooing me there—my handsome husband—and how I loved him. The rest they have told me."

"And told you falsely," muttered Zeno, hoarsely.

"I see—everything has worked into their hands." The man's voice shook with the intensity of his emotion. "And the French school, my lady—you remember that, too, and how you hated it, do you not? You ran away, you know—you put on a suit of boy's clothes, and stole away in the night, and came to your husband. You can't have forgotten how he laughed, and scolded and kissed you all in a breath. I remember how he came out to me with the tears of joy in his handsome eyes, and shook me by the hand—I was a sort of confidant of his, you know—and said he to me: 'I'm glad she's run away, old fellow. It's more than I can do to live without her any longer.' Oh, my lady! where is he now?"

"Heaven help me!" said Audrey. "I can't remember a word."

"Have you forgotten the beautiful house Salaris gave you and your husband—the rich furniture, the costly adornings, the carriages, the servants—why, the very dishes you ate from were of gold, and, when you chose, you wore diamonds that a princess might have envied you. And they tell you Salaris wronged you!"

My lady only moistened her white, dry lips without speaking.

"Ah! my lady," Zeno resumed, "you were very beautiful—you were young; you were courted, you were gay, you were wilful and wayward, and always doing wild, whimsical, strange things that drove Sir Angus and Salaris beside themselves, and made the London folks run after you the more. But suddenly you, always full of such charming vivacity—you, so frank and impulsive, became gloomy, reserved, petulant. My lady, have you forgotten how you followed your husband down to Castle Desmond, and stabbed yourself there before his eyes?"

Lady Audrey sighed heavily.

"Even that," she said, in a hollow voice, "madame has told me. I was mad with jealousy, she



[THE VOW.]

says, and I have the scar here. But to me it is as though it had not been."

Zeno came nearer.
"Have you forgotten," he said, in deep, slow tones, "the night of the ball at Lady Mountain's? You wore yellow satin and magnificent yellow topazes on your neck and arms, and you left the ball with Claude Revere, and went to a celebrated garden, and you fancied you saw your husband there with Lady Lucia Desmond—"

A shriek burst from Lady Saville.
"It is enough," she cried, wildly. "I remember, oh, yes, I remember. He was false to me. I heard him arrange with her to flee, and I gave him the drugged wine the next night."

The lady's slender form quivered with passion.
"I was unformed—I was ignorant, was I? I did not know the world? But I watched them. They thought the little Highland girl had only her pretty face, did they? Zeno," she stopped and looked at him with burning eyes, "that night in the garden I made a solemn vow. I vowed solemnly that as he had cheated the simple child he had taught to love him, he should be cheated—that as he believed me at his mercy, he should be at mine—that as my wrongs were, my revenge should be. Then—"

"Then, my lady?" said Zeno, calmly.
"I kept my vow," Lady Audrey replied, in a low voice.

"Yes, you kept your vow," Zeno repeated, in his deep, slow tones. "You gave your husband drugged wine, and betrayed him worse than Delilah did Sampson. You delivered him over to a ruthless enemy—you sent that proud soul to whom dishonour was unknown to a shame so infamous that it would have slain a courage less sublime. You doomed the man you pretended to love—him who was a king among men, staid and pure, to herd with felons, and clank a chain the rest of his days. You stand here, blooming, beautiful, rich, happy. He has no home but a dungeon, and his heart is broken."

Two hours passed before Lady Saville came out of the room into which she had gone to visit the pretended sick woman.

Zeno held her little hands in his a moment before they parted.

"Child," he said, "it is a consecrated errand upon which thou goest now. To punish the guilty is as much an obligation as to save the innocent. Be your father's daughter, patient, subtle, sure. When the time comes to strike, may Heaven strengthen your arm."

Lady Audrey bowed her beautiful head a moment

while he spoke. Then she lifted it with an air at once proud, remorseful, and determined.

"One week from to-night, Zeno, await me here." The coachman had sat all this time like a statue, as immovable and patient.

He betrayed no surprise now as he beheld his mistress descending the steps with such changed looks. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes scintillated, as she ran down the stairs, sprang into the low carriage without assistance, and, in an impatient, imperious voice ordered him to drive home.

Felice was watching.
She had done nothing but pace the floor for the last two hours, and now at sight of Lady Saville she ran out upon the marble steps to meet her.

Her cruel, cat-like eyes interrogated that lovely face with an alarmed expression, and, as my lady passed in without so much as looking at her, she said to herself:

"Something has happened. She has seen some one that she ought not to have seen. I must find out from the coachman where he has been."

"Where did I drive my lady to?" said the coachman, who was that faithful fellow Mack. "The usual road, and a few miles beyond. Did we stop anywhere? At several places. My lady has a kind heart, and she went to see several poor people."

"No one in particular?" questioned Felice, suspiciously.

"All in particular," said Mack, with a yawn. "I grew tired of it long before she was through. Who knows how many of these wretches tell the truth."

Felice returned to the house; but she waited in vain for Lady Audrey's bell to summon her as usual to dress her for dinner, till at last, making an excuse, she went and knocked at the door of her apartments.

There was no answer, so she tried the door gently. It was locked.

Madame Revere and Lord Neville did not return till late in the afternoon, and they received Felice's intelligence, each very differently.

Claude, flushed with the success of his plans hitherto, and full of faith in his present hopes, only smiled at the Frenchwoman's anxiety.

Madame, on the contrary, sent for the coachman, and questioned him closely; then she went herself to Lady Saville's door and knocked twice as Felice had done. Lady Audrey's voice answered at once, clearly and distinctly:

"I wish to be alone, madame. It is the anniversary of the trial and condemnation of my husband." Madame Revere could not control a shiver of surprise.

Lord Neville turned pale when she told him;

but he laughed afterward, and insisted it was nothing.

Felice went again to Lady Audrey's door at bedtime, but was again sent away peremptorily, my lady required no attendance, and would have none.

"It means something; it must mean something," Felice muttered as she went away.

Lady Saville meanwhile had changed her carriage-dress for a wrapper of white merino, bordered with a heavy embroidery of scarlet roses. Her little feet, cased in white velvet slippers, also embroidered with scarlet, rested on a cushion of satin damask.

She had been reading a manuscript which lay on her knee. It was written in the clear hand of Salaris. Audrey had been weeping; the tears were still in her large starry eyes.

The manuscript was her father's legacy, conveyed to her by Zeno, and it corroborated all which that faithful servant had told her, besides telling her much more. She learned from it that Salaris and Royce Ferguson were indeed her parents, and that Lettice and Royce were one person. She learned what bitter misunderstanding had separated those two, who, notwithstanding the singularity of the circumstances under which they had become husband and wife, loved each other passionately. She learned the strange mystery of Lady Neville's death, the theft of the two children, the accident which had revealed to Royce alone which was the true Lord Neville.

It was a wonderful and terrible revelation which these pages made to Lady Saville.

"My poor, wronged Angus," she murmured, shuddering; "to think that you should be at the mercy of the same cruel hand that stole your gentle mother's life."

For Audrey, in view of all the facts, had rapidly come to the conclusion that her husband was the true heir, and he who was called Lord Neville now was an impostor, a wicked wretch who, not content with defrauding his cousin of his inheritance and thrusting him to a felon's doom, sought also to obtain for himself his wife.

Her faultless face burned with indignation and shame as she thought of the year she had spent under the same roof with the enemies of her own and her husband's house; then, as she remembered the solemn, righteous, and terrible oath to which Zeno had bound her, her great eyes dilated with a wild, high zeal and enthusiasm, and, lifting her little white hand, she shook it till the jewels upon it flashed again while she repeated:

"Oh, I do swear it: never to know rest or weariness till that vow is accomplished."

(To be continued.)



MABEL CARRINGTON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Juliette's Secret," "Grand Court," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

I said, My cousin, is the world so bad,
While I hear nothing of it through the trees?—
The world was always evil—but so bad?
Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

MABEL had heard many stories against the French as a nation, terrible tales some of these, and now they recurred to her mind and filled her with a deep horror—the vile sensuality which sought its own pleasure in the very teeth of all that was honest, pure, and righteous, the intense selfishness of these mere pleasure-seekers, who preferred their own gratification before the happiness, the honour, the very lives of their victims; and looking into the handsome, sinister face of the man before her, she felt that she could readily believe anything and everything evil of him and such as him.

"Sir," she said, "whither are you taking me? I believe that you are deceiving me, and that Madame de la Ronceville is not at your château. I was foolish to believe that she would have left so early in the morning. The servant will return with my message to the housekeeper, then Madame la comtesse will be told that I have gone away in the carriage of the Marquis de Fourmentelle." Mabel wrung her hands. "I am henceforth lost," she cried, passionately, "in the estimation of all good and honest people; my fair name is blighted for ever in the eyes and opinion of the world. Sir, sir, while there is yet time, permit me to descend, and I will find my own way back to the Château de la Ronceville."

Again the marquis laughed his short, low, soft laugh, which had so bitter and mocking a sound. He seized both of Mabel's hands and held them tightly in his strong grasp; his large, beautiful, yet wicked eyes glared upon her with the brightness and the ferocity of a tiger's gaze when it is about to spring upon its prey.

"Charming young Anglaise," said he. "Alas! but all your pretty eloquence is thrown away upon the man before you. 'I am one who never turns back from a pursuit once entered upon, and I love you, oh! I love you more than I ever loved woman before.'"

"How dare you, monsieur," she said, "speak

so to me? I am young, poor, unprotected, and earning my bread. If you detain me against my will, if you bring disgrace upon my name, think not that you will escape punishment, if you were ten times a French noble. I have a father who is a soldier, and though the width of the world separated you from him, he would travel night and day until he has sought you out, and he would wash out his daughter's dishonour in your blood."

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried the marquis, "who would have thought that the dove could have been transformed all at once into the lioness, and I love the lioness even as I worshipped the dove. Ah, it is sweet to hear you, Mabel; to watch the flushing of your fair cheek, and to see your eyes blacken and brighten, your red, eloquent mouth wreathed in scorn, and the gleaming of your white teeth!"

"Meanwhile, you are mine! No power on earth can separate us now. It is useless to scream, for my servants are all well paid, discreet, and quiet, obedient as slaves to my will, and untroubled with scruples. Submit then to become the queen, the idol of the man who adores you!"

"You will find Château Fourmentelle an ancient place. My ancestors held it with their swords. For awhile I have deserted it, leaving it only in the care of my servants; but within this week I have had rooms fitted up for your reception, and you will find two attendants to execute your pleasure. We cannot, indeed, offer you the costly magnificence which you have been accustomed to at the Château de la Ronceville, but things are not amiss. You will remain at De Fourmentelle until this hateful war is over, then I will return."

"Ah, think not that the delights of Paris are to be denied you. When we shall have beaten these Germans into submission, we will return next winter, and the capital will be employed in one succession of fêtes, balls, and illuminations, in honour of our victories."

The wickedness of this terrible man appalled Mabel. She became cold with fear. Her eyes lost their indignant fire, and she looked upon the ground.

"I cannot appeal to his honour," she said to herself, "for he is without honour. I cannot beseech his mercy, for he is merciless. He has no fear either, so that threats do not appal him. I have but one hope—I must escape; but how?"

She sat pondering this weighty question until the driver drew rein and the carriage stopped.

"We are arrived!" cried the marquis. Mabel glanced out and saw a great pair of iron

gates, guarded by the grim visages of two dragons in stone. A very little way from the gate stood the great château. One of its vast wings or galleries, indeed, actually flanked the highway, where there was a bend in the road farther on. Only a round, smooth lawn lay between the gates and De Fourmentelle—we speak here of the château, not of the man. The driver whistled with a silver call. There was no lodge near the gates, but immediately a man came running out from the house, a man with a shock head of hair, and Mabel, looking into his face, read that there was no pity thereon. It was an evil, cunning face, with greedy eyes and thin, cruel lips. He opened the gates, and the carriage drove round the grass plot and drew up in front of the château.

All this while the marquis had not once relinquished his hold of the slender hands of Mabel. She felt powerless in his grasp as a small bird in that of a pitiless schoolboy. She had thought of screaming once or twice, but fear of the remorseless villain at her side had held her silent, and the carriage had been driven very rapidly, and the road was lonely. Evidently the marquis had been expected at the château. The front door was opened, steps were let down. The marquis leaped out of the carriage. A woman stood on one side of the door, and a man on the other, and the marquis held out his hand to assist Mabel to alight.

"Descend, my dear mademoiselle," said he, cheerfully, in French.

Mabel would have spurned the assistance of his hand had it been possible, but it was not possible. Another moment and she stood upon the steps of the château.

The hall was large and paved with white and black stones. The walls were of dark oak, and many a stag's head and bear's head, and four grinning wolves' heads, together with swords and rusty fire-arms, were the ornaments, the decorations, which embellished the ancient place. The ceiling was lofty and handsomely carved, but there was no splendour, no air of luxury in that portion of the Château Fourmentelle.

The marquis by this time seized again the hand of Mabel, and now he led her up the wide staircase. The man and woman brought up the rear. There was a great landing-place on the first floor, carpetless, but of polished oak. There were several family portraits against the walls; these were faded, and the gilt had worn off their frames. The marquis compelled Mabel to mount another flight of stairs. The man and woman still brought up the rear. At the head of these stairs was a long, narrow passage, and

at the end of this passage a door, before which the marquis paused. He drew an immense key from his pocket, unlocked the door, and led the way into a pretty apartment, with a rich carpet of purple and gold colour in the centre of the polished oak floor. The furniture was in satin to match. There was a splendid mirror over the mantelpiece, and there were large vases filled with fragrant flowers.

"This is your dining-room," said the marquis. "A lunch shall be served to you here immediately."

The marquis then led the way into another apartment. Here the furniture was of crimson damask and oak, and there was a book-case filled with very gaily bound books. Also a piano in a walnut-wood case. There were some pretty oil paintings of landscapes on the walls.

"This is your library," said the marquis. "Now for the drawing-room."

The drawing-room was an exceedingly pretty room, furnished in bright green silk and rosewood. The carpet represented green fern leaves, with here and there a scarlet poppy, and three or four golden corn ears. The mirrors, vases, and white Parian statues were charming. The windows opened upon a balcony and commanded a view of the flower-garden, which seemed to have been recently put into order. It was bounded by a high stone wall, in which was a door.

"That is the fruit-garden," said the marquis. "You can go there with Judith or Auguste whenever you like. They will gather you peaches and green-gages, and grapes from the hot-house. Now for your sleeping apartments."

The marquis threw open wide the door of the sleeping apartment. Bed-curtains, cushions, and chairs were of bright rose-coloured silk. The carpet was of velvet pile, a pattern of roses upon a white ground.

"See here. I chose pink," cried the marquis, "because your hair is dark and your complexion of such a perfect fairness. Judith will open your wardrobe and show you the walking costumes, the ball dresses, the pieces of silk and satin which I have bought for you."

Judith rushed to the wardrobe, unfastened it, and threw out upon the bed a heap of costly dresses, comprising all the colours of the rainbow—dresses of canary-coloured satin, blue satin, mauve, and purple and black silks.

Mabel turned away in horror.

"Nay," said the marquis, "look here." He drew a case from his pocket, opened it, and displayed a necklace and cross of priceless opals and diamonds. "Accept my first love-gift," said he.

"No, monsieur. I would rather die," replied Mabel.

His cheek grew pale—he laughed an unpleasant laugh. He shut the case and returned it to his pocket.

"Such gifts are not often offered twice, *ma belle*," he said. "Why, had you even sold those jewels, they would have rendered you independent for life. But never mind. Serve up the lunch, Auguste. We are hungry."

Auguste left the suite of apartments, and his master locked the door of the dining-room.

Judith still followed her master about, smirking and smiling. She was a thin, cunning, evil-faced woman of fifty-eight, neatly dressed in black silk, a white cap, and a white apron. She wore a white muslin neckerchief fastened by a large garnet pin, and garnet ear-rings were in her ears. Nothing could have been more scrupulously clean, more respectable than her attire, with her smooth bands of iron-gray hair and her black velvet boots; but nothing could have been less respectable than the expression of her countenance. It was a face that one would have expected to have encountered within the walls of a prison—an evil, wrinkled face, cunning-eyed and cruel-lipped. Excessively ugly was Judith, with a complexion like old parchment, yellow and shrivelled, a somewhat flattened nose, and overhanging gray eyebrows.

"I am going away," said the marquis, "to make a slight alteration in my toilette. Meanwhile, Judith, attend to this demoiselle. She will find all toilette requisites in the next room."

The marquis then left the old woman and the young girl alone together. He securely locked the door of the dining-room, the only door in all that suite of apartments which communicated with the other parts of the chateau.

"Mademoiselle will gain better spirits," cried Judith; "she will learn to appreciate monsieur le marquis. Ah! how many ladies would willingly die for his love—die, die for his love! And you, you coquette, mademoiselle—you profess not to love him."

"Woman!" cried Mabel, "how dare you insult me? This marquis is a married man; he has had the insolence to tell me himself the history of his marriage, and of his wife. I come from a country

whose women would rather die than bring such shame upon their names as you and yonder man would urge! Do not think that I will sit down to yonder board with him. No! I would rather go without food; I prefer death to dishonour."

Judith clapped her hands and laughed; then she spoke so rapidly that Mabel, whose ears were not yet quite accustomed to all the intricacies of the French tongue, could hardly follow her meaning. Then she spoke more slowly.

"You will starve, mademoiselle? you will not eat food?" she cried. "Well and good, for in a little while you will feel hunger, and when you have felt hunger a little while you will eat; when the marquis comes back after two or three days' absence, he will find you in a different mood."

At this moment the door of the dining-room opened, and the marquis re-entered. He was followed by Auguste and a boy bearing well-loaded trays. Soon the table was spread with plate, glass, and china, all of the finest. Then the two male domestics left the room; the marquis locked the door upon them, and put the key in his pocket.

Mabel walked to the window, and looked resolutely out upon the flower garden. The marquis followed her.

"You think the prospect a little dull?" he said. "I shall soon die," said Mabel, with a smile; "and you may congratulate yourself upon being the murderer of a weak and defenceless girl—it will be a great triumph."

"Yes, it will be a triumph," returned the marquis, "because, mademoiselle, you have set my heart on fire, you have put my soul in a tumult, you have robbed my days of their amusements, and my nights of their sleep. Either you must consent to love me, or you must be contented with a life of isolation. You shall never marry any one else—say, I could satisfy myself on that point, if I could once place you in a convent, either in Italy or Spain, for there they would never permit you to leave, and you might be compelled to pray and fast all your days. But I do not see how I could contrive that. No; you will remain here. You tell me very scornfully that it will be a great triumph to me to cause your death; and I answer that you are right, according to the creed I live by. I have set my heart on winning you, and if I fail, nobody else shall succeed, nobody else shall marry you."

"Great Heaven!" cried Mabel, "is France a Christian country? Is this the material out of which Frenchmen are hewn?"

The marquis laughed long and loudly.

"You grow eloquent, *chère demoiselle*," he said; "your eloquence becomes you. We are not pruders here in France; we have done long ago with all the good little books and good morals they taught us in our childhood."

She put her hands to her ears at this, and turned away.

"I will hear nothing more!" she exclaimed; "not another word!"

Again the marquis laughed.

"You will have to listen to a great deal," he said.

"But here comes the lunch."

There was a knock at the door as he spoke. He unlocked it, and there entered Auguste, and the boy, bearing trays, with dishes and silver covers. These were taken off, and there appeared partridge, fowls, and soup. There were also pastry, fruit, fine wheaten bread, and vegetables.

"Sit down!" said the marquis.

He placed a chair for Mabel, but she turned away. "I will not eat bread under this roof!" she said, firmly.

"Perhaps you will eat fruit then; or will you drink a glass of wine?" said the marquis, smiling. "In yonder sideboard I have some of the rarest vintage."

"I prefer hunger, and thirst, and death!" said Mabel.

There was a grand and heroic air about her as she spoke. It was the pale, pure face of a saint, who would have walked in all the majesty of holiness to the stake rather than have proved recalcitrant to her religion, or unfaithful to her training. Just for a moment this reckless and unscrupulous Frenchman was slightly awed. He saw in the large violet eyes a high resolve.

Mabel sat down at some distance from the table, and folded her hands upon her lap.

The marquis went to the sideboard, and busied himself, assisted by Auguste, in decanting the wine. Neither of the servants had comprehended the conversation, for it had been carried on in English.

De Fourmontelle perceived that he could never conquer Mabel, or bring her to think as he thought. A deadly purpose entered into his soul, and he said to himself, calmly:

"If she will not yield she must take the consequences."

Then, as he was really hungry and thirsty, and felt fatigued by his early drive, he went to the table, and partook of a hearty meal.

Mabel, smiling contemptuously to herself, set down this man's professions of love at what they were worth, for could one who loved another eat with the appetite of a gourmand at the time when that other was suffering and starving voluntarily?

The marquis finished his meal, watching the pale, downcast face furtively from time to time. At length he signed to the servants that he had finished, and they were to remove the dishes. Then he approached Mabel once more.

"I shall return again at seven o'clock to dinner," he said, "and perhaps by that time, mademoiselle, you will be in a different mood. If not, I can only promise you that you will still find me in the same mind."

Mabel bowed her head. The marquis likewise bowed his, then he left the room, followed by all the servants. He locked the door on the outside, and Mabel was left alone in the suite of apartments. Then the high spirit which had hitherto supported her gave way, and, bending her head upon her hands, she burst into tears.

CHAPTER VIII.

What was I to her that she should tell me aught?
A friend? Was I a friend? I see all clear;
Such devils would pull angels out of heaven,
Provided they could reach them.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

SHE sat there weeping for hours. Determined as she was, fatigue, exhaustion, and even hunger overcame her towards afternoon. All the *débris* of the meal had been carried away, the sideboard had been locked up, and there was no wine. She went through all the handsome apartments to her bed-chamber, with its rose-coloured silk hangings, its rich cushioned chairs, and flowery carpet. The basins and ewers upon the marble washstand were of the finest Sevres porcelain. Ewers and crystal carafes were full of fresh spring water, so Mabel did not scruple to drink some, then she lay down on the bed, having first removed all the fine dresses to the couches and chairs, where she cast them down carelessly.

There was a slip bolt to her door, and, having fastened this, she felt so far secure. She believed that if she could once sleep she should awaken with a mind more strengthened, either for endurance or action. Soon she slept soundly.

When she awakened the sun was setting behind the tall fruit trees in the garden beyond the walls. She arose, and bathed her face, then she became sensible of a stern and cruel fact. She was desperately hungry—ravenous indeed. Oh! how hard, how frightfully hard it would be to die by inches with those slow, consuming pangs; and if there was food placed within her reach, would she be able to resist partaking of it? Nature spoke loudly within her, and said "No." But there was another voice stronger than the voice of nature, and this voice told her that if she once ate the bread of this bad man she would have succumbed to him in some degree.

Her window opened to a stone balcony, and she stepped out upon it, meditating escape. Alas! the leap from that height upon hard gravel would have been death even to an acrobat. She shuddered and grew faint as she looked down.

Then suddenly she saw a strange sight. Sitting upon the high wall of the fruit garden was a young woman in a dress of a dark purple colour. A white handkerchief was pinned across her bosom in the fashion of the peasants of the country. A quantity of brown hair, unkempt and lustreless, hung down her back, and she wore round her brow a wreath of *immortelles*. She was swinging her foot idly against the wall, and did not perceive Mabel. But happening to turn her eyes towards the chateau, she all at once saw the young girl standing on the balcony. The effect was instantaneous. With a wild scream she leaped to the ground, then tripped across the lawn, and stood under the window, looking up at Mabel. Her face was strangely white—nay, it was ghastly, and there were hollow rings round her eyes. She was not very young, perhaps one or two and thirty, but the expression of the face made Mabel shudder; it was terrible; it was unearthly.

"You!" she cried, "you!" speaking in her rapid French, "are you his new favourite? Is he promising you his love? If I could get at you I would tear you in pieces. But never mind, vengeance will come. He will tire of you—laugh at you; bring home a new face to mock at you, then you will go out, broken-hearted, as I did, as I did! I wish I could get at you," she repeated, "but I can't, I can't! Yet, stay a moment!"

She started off as she spoke, returned to the wall, sprang into the boughs of an acacia, thence found her way to the summit of the wall, and dropped into the

garden below. Mabel, watching in some trepidation, saw her return; at least, saw what rather alarmed her, that was, the top of a ladder over the wall; then suddenly it came to the ground. Another moment, and the wild-looking woman was descending the rungs of the ladder; anon, and she stood on the ground. Soon she was pushing the ladder rapidly before her, and Mabel with horror saw it placed against the balcony. The wild woman was mounting it now, and in another moment would stand beside her—and this woman was mad; nay, she was a dangerous maniac.

Mabel stood her ground. Better, she thought, to fall a victim to this distraught creature than to be snared in any trap of the atrocious marquis. Another moment and the wild woman actually stood upon the balcony at her side. Mabel eyed her. There was something in her commanding look which cowed the other, awed, humiliated her. She absolutely sank down, crouching upon the stone floor of the balcony, almost in the attitude of a chastised hound, and she whimpered forth:

"You don't know, you don't know the truth. He has a wife; he can't marry you. He will grow tired of you, and turn you away!"

"I know that he has a wife," said Mabel, "and that he is a bad man. He brought me here with false words, telling me that my friends were here, and now I wish to escape him. If I could get down that ladder, and mount that garden wall, I might escape."

"No, you shall not escape," returned the other, with a weird and unnatural smile. "You shall drain the cup of shame to the dregs, as I have drained it. Let him grow tired of you and mock you, as he has grown tired of me, and mocked me. It is worse than death when those we love despise us."

"But I do not love him!" cried Mabel, vehemently. "I hate him! I abhor—I detest him!"

"It is a lie!" cried the mad girl, uttering a wild, unearthly laugh. "Every woman that looks on him loves him, for he is one who sits as a god, and all foolish women bow down to him, although he is a false god."

"I am not a foolish woman, for I hate him!" said Mabel.

"You tell me so, but it is false!" was the passionate response. "Do you know my name?" "I am Marie! My father was head gardener here in the time of the old marquis, fourteen years ago. I was eighteen then, only eighteen, and Adolphe was nineteen. Ah! he was like the god Mars that I have seen in a painting in the great dining-hall. He was beautiful, beautiful, and I—I was the prettiest girl in all France"—she nodded her head defiantly as she spoke—"in all France, in all France, and he told me he would marry me and make me a marquis when his father died. I am ugly now, and my youth has gone; my eyes are hollow, and my face is wrinkled; I have gray threads in my hair, and I am mad, mad, mad!"

She laughed now, so wild a laugh that Mabel trembled.

"Well, I loved, loved, loved him—loved him so that the good priest, to whom I confessed all, told me that I should lose my soul for him. I went with him at last to Paris, and I lived with him in a fine house, and I drove in the Bois, and one day I found that he spoke to me sharply, coldly, all the love was gone out of his tones. I felt something then," she put her hand to her head, "which told me I should go mad. He changed day by day; he grew cold, he went out always, he left me alone. Then came with him one day a lady, handsome and young, with bright, black eyes and rose-coloured cheeks, and she laughed when she saw me. 'Is this your peasant?' she said. 'I find her ugly. She shan't sup with us.' He turned to me savagely. 'Go out and sup in your room,' he said. 'I can't have you here.' I cried out at this, a bitter cry. 'Adolphe, Adolphe,' I said, 'where is all the love you promised me?' 'It is forgotten,' he answered, 'and you were a fool to believe me. But you shall not remain here. Pack up your things and return to your parents, and I will give you a bill on my bank for a thousand francs. I have also given you some presents which you can sell, and let me hear no more of you. I am sick to death, and tired of your name.' I packed my things mechanically. I took my bill of a thousand francs, and I went home all in a stupor. My father would have turned me out, but my mother took me in. I remained at home some time, all that while my mind was giving way, while the time was drawing near for a terrible outbreak which they call dangerous madness."

Here Marie clapped her hands and laughed a terrible laugh.

"My father's cottage is in the wood beyond the fruit garden. I was always watching this chateau and the ladies who came in and out of it. The marquis's father and the marchioness's mother were alive then, and the ladies who visited here were not

such as come now. I was not jealous of the black-eyed woman I had seen in Paris—I knew he would not marry her; but I wondered whom he would marry, and that was the person I had resolved to murder—his bride! Meanwhile, nobody supposed I was mad. For his part he had utterly forgotten me, and he supposed I was milking my cow, cultivating my vegetables, spinning my flax at home. A thousand francs and the presents he had given me were to pay me for my broken heart and my parents for my blighted name. Once I had obtained access to the fruit garden, and I sat upon the wall as I did just now, and I saw a young lady come down the terrace steps from the dining-room, and she began to walk up and down the lawn, reading from a book. She was very fair and slender, and had long, fair curls floating over her shoulders; she wore a dress of sky-blue satin, and an upper skirt of white lace. I took it into my head that she was the fiancée, the intended bride. Concealed in my bosom was a dagger I had worn for months. I sprang down from the wall; I rushed upon the young lady. I seized her, and strove to plunge my dagger into her heart, but for all her slender form and her pale face she had much strength, more than I had, far more; so she wrested the dagger from me and screamed. Servants came running out of the house, who seized me and bound me. After that a doctor pronounced me dangerously mad, and I was sent to a *maison de santé*—that is a madhouse—a hundred miles from here. There they ill-used me and beat me; still news came to me of what went on here. I know that the marquis and marchioness are dead, and that Adolphe is the master of De Fourmentelle; I know that Adolphe is married, that his wife is humpbacked and ugly—uglier even than I am now; I know that he has spent her money, or is spending it. I escaped from the madhouse a fortnight ago; I have been in it for twelve years. I have saved up money and bought a dagger, and I promised myself that I would search out one of his lady friends and kill her—just kill one of his favourites. I have thought of this for years, and now I have come here in time, just in time!"

She put her hand to her shrunken bosom as she spoke, and prepared to make a spring. Another moment—it all passed so quickly that Mabel could never recollect it clearly—the dagger was glittering just above her throat, and she was engaged in deadly struggle with the mad Marie.

The power of the mania seemed gigantic, but Mabel also seemed to be gifted with unnatural strength while fighting so desperately for her life. She warded off the approaching point of the instrument of death, and the face, the ghastly, fearful, white face of the maniac, was glaring terribly into her own.

Meanwhile she heard footsteps and voices in the other rooms. She herself had slipped the bolt of her door, and so shut herself off from the assistance of the servants. But she shouted out:

"Here is a madwoman, who is trying to kill me. There is a ladder against the balcony! Come round and save me!"

She had thought before that she would rather have died than have fallen into the hands of the marquis; but now that death came so near she clung to life as all of us do.

More warding off of that deadly arm, heart now panting against heart, and eyes glaring into eyes; it seemed as though relief would never come; but presently she heard the sounds of footsteps and voices in the garden below.

Another moment, and the head of Auguste appeared above the balcony. He was strong as a wolf and as ferocious; he sprang at once upon Marie, wrenched the dagger from her, drew a silk handkerchief from his pocket, bound her hands together, cut off a strong bell-rope, wound it about her, and tied her down tightly in a chair. All was the work of a few seconds.

Marie sat glaring and grinning. She did not seem half as furious at being baulked of her revenge as might have been expected.

"I am not to do it," she said, with a wild laugh. "This is the second of his friends I have tried to stab, and have failed. Never mind; third time pays for all."

"We heard of your escape," cried Auguste. "We thought you might come here, and we meant to watch for you; but you were too quick for us."

Mabel had sunk into a cushioned chair; she was trembling exceedingly, but her surprise was great when she perceived, rising above the parapet of the balcony, the peculiar hat of a Roman Catholic priest; then there appeared the mild and handsome countenance of a fair-complexioned priest, who might perhaps have lived some four and forty years in this weary world. He stepped upon the balcony without ceremony, and bared his head to Mabel with a sort of grave yet sorrowful respect. His dark hair was

closely shaven, his large hazel eyes had a melancholy light in them. It was the refined and spiritual countenance of a man in the prime of life. Much intellectual vigour was contained in that broad and massive brow.

Mabel felt hope enter her heart when she looked on the sweet and serious face of the priest.

Auguste turned towards him somewhat angrily:

"There was no occasion for you to have followed her here, Father Clement," he said. "We could have brought her down to you, pinioned in a chair like a trussed fowl."

"I apologise humbly for intruding," said Father Clement. "I thought you might have wanted assistance, and, besides, it is my duty to see that this poor creature is not ill-used. They have written to me from the *maison de santé*, giving me a full account of her escape and antecedents, and a child having told me that she saw a woman, with unbound hair, wearing a wreath of *immortelles*, and apparently mad, rushing down the paths of the shrubbery which lead to the chateau, I hurried hither, for I know what form her madness is likely to take, and I felt fearful that she would only be too likely to encounter here somebody who would arouse her jealousy." As he spoke he looked reproachfully at Mabel. "When I found you running round the house with cries of 'She is here!' I followed you. This poor creature is not quite deaf to the voice of religion. It is sometimes in the power of the Church, through its servants, to administer consolation, to reprove, exhort, entreat—"

He glanced towards Mabel as he spoke.

"I shall bring a carriage for this poor creature, and conduct her to my house. There she will remain until they send her proper escorts to re-conduct her to the *maison de santé*. Now I will take my leave."

He looked wistfully towards Mabel again as he spoke, and Mabel answered the look with one of entreaty.

"Will you not allow me to come with you, Father Clement?" she exclaimed. "I am a prisoner here against my will. You must not think badly of me—"

Auguste interrupted Mabel with a loud, coarse laugh.

"Do not pay attention to the little vagaries of mademoiselle, *mon père*," said he. "She and the marquis have had a tiff—a lover's quarrel, that's all. And now she would make out a cruel case against his lordship. But I would advise you, *mon père*, not to interfere."

"*Mon père*," cried Mabel, "I swear to you that if you leave me here you will be doing me a great and very terrible wrong. Monsieur de Fourmentelle brought me here against my will, and now he threatens to keep me here a prisoner, to drive me to despair, and to death. I have had no lover's quarrel with the marquis, who has never been to me even a friend. You perceive by my accent in speaking French that I am a foreigner—English. You will understand then that I am friendless. You would not act with less Christianity than would a Protestant clergyman under similar circumstances? You will surely assist me to escape?"

"My daughter," cried Father Clement, "come with me at once."

Mabel caught up her hat which had fallen to the ground, and put her hand within that of the priest.

"Unbolt the door, Auguste," said Father Clement, in a commanding tone. "If you persist in detaining this lady prisoner—if you oppose her escape from the house, you and your wife Judith shall both be put under the ban—you shall be excommunicated."

The superstitious if not the religious fears of the French servant were aroused. He wrung his hands.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he cried, "*Mon Dieu!* Would that monsieur le marquis were at home. He cares not for excommunications, for bans, or for priests. But with us it is different, we are poor people. If we were smitten with sickness or with blindness it would be terrible. Go then, Father Clement, and take with you this accursed English demoiselle, who has more prudery than would suffice to set up a convent of nuns."

This tribute to her honour, which Auguste gave in the irritation of temper, exonerated Mabel in the eyes of the priest. He bowed to her, he looked at her, and his bow and his look both said, "Mademoiselle, I respect you—I venerate you!"

So it actually came to pass that Mabel walked out of the wicked Chateau de Fourmentelle in the golden dusk of the summer evening, unscathed, unharmed, led by the hand of a pious man, who seemed to have been sent to her rescue by Heaven.

Judith ran out of the lower court screeching, but when she saw the priest she crouched upon the ground and called out:

"Don't put us under the ban, *mon père*. Neither Auguste nor I had anything to do with this."

They actually found their way out into the high road.

The house of the priest was about half a mile from the chateau, and was situated close to the church, a fine old Norman building. It was a neat little white cottage, surrounded by an orchard and garden.

Father Clement, still leading Mabel by the hand, went under his rustic porch, then into a very neat parlour, plainly furnished, but where everything shone with cleanliness. An active, cleanly old woman had laid his cloth and prepared his dinner, which she was dishing just as he entered. It consisted of stewed beef, with vegetables, cheese, an omelette, a dish of cherries, and boiled coffee and milk.

"You shall have a glass of wine, my child, for I know you are sinking. Sit down and eat, I entreat you; do not wait for me. I must go away at once to get a carriage and people to bring away that poor maniac. She will remain at the inn until you are gone, then she will come here."

"A maniac?" cried old Justine.

"Ay, Justine; one who was brought to that state by the wickedness of man, of a fellow-countryman, of a Frenchman. Oh, France, my unhappy country! it is not only Prussian arms that will cast you into the dust; it is your own wickedness, your love of sinful pleasures. Corrupt at heart is this great country; only by fire and sword will it be purified."

The priest walked out of the house, and Justine lighted the lamp and helped the starving Mabel to a good meal.

She had finished her dinner and was sipping her coffee, when she heard the sound of wheels in the lane, then loud voices, then trampling footsteps. Her heart beat high with a new terror—and, in sooth, poor Mabel had good reason for her fears. It was not the marquis whom she had now to dread, but another foe, even more implacable, more infuriated.

Into the little parlour there rushed a woman, a dwarfish, humpbacked woman. She was dressed in purple satin, with a long white cloak. Her bonnet was fashionable and elegant, but it did not impart any dignity to her thin, white face, lined by suffering both mental and bodily. The eyes of this lady were fearful to look upon, for she squinted in a manner that might appal weak nerves. More like a little demon than a living woman of flesh and blood was the small female who entered the priest's parlour, despite her rich dress and the great bracelets of topazes and rubies which hung upon her wrists. She was actually followed by four tall servants in livery.

"Seize her, seize her!" cried the dwarfish lady, stamping her feet. "Seize the infamous one who has inveigled my husband from me. Do you know that I am the Marchioness de Fourmentelle? I will bear you away now to an old chateau which I have in the north. I will chain you in a dungeon!" and the infuriated woman added epithets too cruel to be written or remembered.

It almost seemed to Mabel as if those women who loved De Fourmentelle became maniacs.

Meanwhile Mabel was at the mercy of this fury, and no one to protect her but old Justine.

(To be continued.)

SQUEAKING SHOES.

AMONG the minor evils of life few are to be ranked higher than squeaking shoes. When a boy, we used to regard this quality with high favour. On one occasion, when being measured for a new pair of shoes—they were to be our best shoes, and of course to be worn only on Sunday—we stipulated that the maker should put in some squeak leather. When the shoes came home, and were as mute as if made of fur, we felt that word had been broken with us, and that the shoemaker had cheated us out of an important element. It used to afford us much speculation what it was that made the noise; and, indeed, to this day the problem is not solved.

We well remember an elderly gentleman, whose boots were all ablaze with blacking, who walked his room for hours every day. He seemed to read a-foot. His steps were slow and deliberate. Every particle of squeak, at each tread, rushed out in full, with a most impressive effect. We sought to imitate it, but it was too regal altogether for our little pit-a-pat steps. We often contrasted this measured tread of the dignified old gentleman with the quick step of a nervous-footed lady, who went back and forth on household duty, with a short and pert squeak in the shoes that seemed to say "Quick, quick, quick" just as plainly as the solemn old gentleman's said "Be-qui-et; be-qui-et."

As people grow out of boyhood they are less content with mere noise, and at length become impatient of it. After a time we felt our admiration of musical boots sensibly abated. There lingered for a long time a pleasant association with the sound passing in the street under our windows. It seemed to be a sign of respectability. Did any one ever know of a shabbily dressed man whose boots squeaked? The first decided rebuff which our partially-received was

the result of attempts, in boyish games, to hide. Our shoes betrayed us.

Men whose boots squeak always sit near the speaker, and are obliged to walk down the whole length of the room. Only now and then one is bold enough to walk flat-footed to the door. In general they have a sneaking consciousness of their misdeemeanour, and go through all manner of ungainly efforts to abbreviate or to muffle the noise. They walk on the extreme tips of their feet, or on the edges, or even on the heels. This only modifies the noise, and makes the hearer more curious to follow it, and so results in a more effectual disturbance.

There is but one proper way in regard to squeaking boots or shoes—leave them at home, and, if need be, stay there with them! But, if by any misfortune you are caught in an assembly and need to go out, pull off your shoes, and carry them out as you would a lizard or cockatrice. If you have not courage for that, then don't crouch, and go mincing along on your toes, but step flatly and quickly, and be done with it. It is one of the cases in which a run even would be welcome to all whom you leave behind you.

But of all nerve-vexing trials, what is to be compared with an attempt to go to sleep with a family above your head in which both man and wife wear squeak leather?

H. W. B.

THE EARL'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE rocky walls of that portion of the secret passage where Griselda sat down to rest presented many fissures, some of which, deep and wide, had a wild, cavernous appearance; others seemed mere crevices, extending but a short distance inward.

As Griselda sat upon the edge of the shelf, her lamp in her hand, and her eyes roving over the broken wall, she saw in one of the crevices what appeared to be a small iron box.

She determined to possess it. For a long time her efforts to extricate it were fruitless; but at length the margin of the rock which held it crumbled off, and the box dropped with a crash upon the stone step at her feet.

The box was wound about by a long leathern strap, which through age and damp had mouldered to rottenness. This had served as its only fastening, and soon the contents of the box were laid bare to her gaze.

First came several letters, which, owing to the close fitting of the lid, were well preserved. Beneath the letters was a tiny gold locket, with an exquisitely wrought chain attached.

Griselda opened the locket and gazed upon the pictured face of a man who resembled Philip Monteith so closely that at first she thought the likeness must be his. But on closer inspection she saw that the face had an older, more careworn look than that of Philip, while the hair and eyes were darker.

There was a name engraven beneath the picture, and to her astonishment she found it was Gregory, Marquis of Haldimand—the former husband of her mother.

She laid the picture almost reverently in the box and opened one of the letters. She knew not why she did so, but an invisible power seemed to impel her.

A cry of amazement escaped her lips as she recognised the peculiar penmanship of her mother. Still more was she amazed at the contents of the letter. There must be some dreadful mistake, she thought, and glanced at the signature. Her mother's name and her present title were appended in full.

In utter bewilderment Griselda read the whole of the letters through. They were addressed to Herman Lesage, Philip's foster-father, and bore dates of eighteen years before.

A wave of joy swept across the girl's pure face as she restored the letters to their place and rose to her feet, holding the rusty box firmly in her hand.

"Poor mamma," she murmured, with a happy smile, her own sorrows then all forgotten; "how she has mourned all these years, knowing her stepson living while every one else believed him dead. I do not wonder now at her settled melancholy, though it is a wonder her mind did not give way, as so many people do."

Griselda after this went on her way thinking neither of the cruel Brian nor Mrs. Lyell, but of her mother and of the stepson whom she hoped would be soon restored to her arms and to his heritage.

Soon she reached Sunset Cottage, and recounted to Mrs. Lesage the story of her recent narrow escape from death.

She also told her of the box she had found, and that Philip was her own mother's stepson.

The delight of the good woman knew no bounds. She had known of the box, she said, but nothing of its contents, save that they related to Philip.

Strange to say, as the minutes flew past, and

Griselda sat by the wide-open window conversing with the mother of her departed friend, she forgot entirely all her fears of detectives and the like.

Away from Mrs. Lyell and her gloomy talk of murder, spies, police officers, and prisons, she no longer had a thought of concealing herself. Not that she had any conception of the truth, but conscious of her own innocence of crime, and relying upon obtaining her father's forgiveness for her disobedience of his written commands, she was resolved, at once to return to Silvermere, and brave the worst that fate might have in store for her.

While Mrs. Lesage was preparing something for Griselda to eat, the latter cast her eyes through the open window to the flowery yard, when to her horror she saw the red-eyed Brian creeping on all fours a close to the window that she fancied now, as for a moment she stood transfixedly gazing at him, that she could feel his hot breath wafted towards her by the wind. One unsightly hand of the villain was clutched upon a glittering knife.

His wolfish eyes were fastened devouringly upon her slender throat, while his fingers clutched mortally the knife which thirsted for her blood.

The poor girl's head swam. Her senses seemed leaving her. She felt as if sinking to the floor. Still, with those greedy eyes fastened upon her, the wretch moved on, drawing each instant nearer to the window and to her. To faint now would be her certain death.

Griselda did not faint. The weakness which had seized her was but momentary. Rallying her powers, she gave vent to a piercing shriek, which the tall cliff re-echoed, then, springing to the window, she closed it before Brian, now, like a beast of prey, the more terribly enraged that his intended victim sought to escape, could spring to his feet.

Standing, half-bent, he rushed to the window and attempted to beat in the sash with his fists.

Griselda's only hope lay in flight. Weak and exhausted from want of food, she flew across the garden and into a field used as a grazing-place for cows.

From the pasture field she crossed a common. Leaving this, she entered upon a beautiful grassy enclosure which rose in the centre to a high knoll, and was fringed upon two sides by a wood of low growth. She ascended the knoll by a circuitous path, and looked about her in the hope of finding a temporary hiding-place where she might rest her tired limbs.

Then she saw that the quiet, sequestered spot she was in was a place of burial for the dead. She walked on and came to a new-made grave—the resting-place of Aurora Lesage.

She knelt down upon the sand-covered grass beside the grave, and bowed her head humbly above the dust of her who had been her friend. She forgot Brian and her wild flight from the cottage, though, for aught she could tell, he was close upon her footsteps.

As the maiden knelt, weeping softly over the new-made grave, she became conscious that a footstep was approaching her. With a wild thought of Brian and his glittering knife she sprang to her feet.

Turning in the direction of the wood with the intention of seeking refuge therein, she nearly ran against a small boy, none other than Toby Goodhue, who mistook her for the so-called Lady Valeria.

Griselda eyed Toby askance. Who could he be who seemed to know her? She smiled and said:

"You seem to know me, little boy; so pray tell me your name."

"I'm Toby Goodhue, my lady."

Looking up sharply at her, he went on:

"Do you want me to call you that, or Miss Griselda, which? My face is dirty now, perhaps that is the reason you don't know me. I'd have been back to Silvermere, helping my uncle tend the garden, only for them queer dungeons under the tower. I wonder what they've ever put there for. You see I come here with a gentleman that took me for his valet."

"So," thought the maiden, quite naturally, "this boy has been in the grounds with his uncle, the gardener, some time, and must have seen me there."

But a look of perplexity came into her eyes when she remembered that he had called her Griselda. Where had he heard the name?

"Ah! I have it now. He has been strolling about the place since his master left him, and has been to the cottage, where Mrs. Lesage has told him of me—that I was at the castle, and was called Griselda; and perhaps she showed him the little sketch poor Aurora made of my face."

She now thought of Brian, who, singularly enough, had not been in her mind for several minutes. She was walking away towards the wood, and the boy was following.

She suddenly resolved to confide in this boy so far as to tell him that she was fleeing for her life, and in quest of a safe refuge from a murderous foe. The little fellow looked honest and true, and he might be able to help her to escape.

So she told him her story. Toby looked round bravely when she told him of Brian, as though he already felt himself her champion, and expected to do battle with the burly ruffian in her defence.

After that he looked at her again sharply, his lips ever and anon moving in inaudible whispers.

"It ain't Miss Griselda after all. I've a notion to ask her, only I daren't. Anyhow I'll keep quiet, and help her get away from that fellow's clutches all I can."

As Toby thus whispered to himself a triumphant shout rang through the wood. The boy threw up his head manfully. Bounding ahead of the maiden, he cried:

"He's in the kirkyard, and he sees where you've been, you may depend. He thinks he's got you now, that's what makes him holler so braggy like. But if you'll foller me, and ain't afraid to go back towards the castle, I'll take you into the glen, amongst lots of big rocks and craggy places, where you can creep in out of his sight."

Griselda consented, and they changed their course, going down the wooded slope towards the glen.

The maiden, though nearly exhausted, would not, dared not pause to rest. Her gray robe floated behind her as she sped onward, and was caught fast upon many a thorny bush, leaving oftentimes a fragment for the guidance of her murderous pursuer.

When they reached the verge of the glen and entered its thickly wooded precincts Toby gave vent to a low whistle, and smiled up into his companion's face, heroically saying:

"Now we're most safe, and if you'll push on ahead I'll foller arter and see you don't leave any of your frock on these bushes for him to see."

Griselda yielded to his wishes, leading the way as best she could through the tangled underwood. They could hear Brian now with terrible distinctness, as he came crashing through the brushwood. The fleeing pair pressed on in silence, not trusting themselves to speak through fear that their voices would be heard and their whereabouts made known to their pursuer.

The maiden felt herself grow strong with hope, despite Brian's proximity, for the refuge she longed to gain was close at hand. She could see the towers of the castle above the trees.

She had told Toby of the secret passage as they hastened on, so when they reached the spot where the marble slab was concealed it remained for her only to remove the stone, give the boy a few directions, and disappear, sliding from her pursuer's very grasp, as it were, into the bowels of the earth.

A few seconds after the disappearance of Griselda Brian came up. He eyed the boy with a scowl.

"How long have you been here?" was his first question.

"It couldn't ha' been more'n a two o'clock when I first come."

"Tain't that now, you imp," and Brian glanced at the sun.

"Ain't it? Well I couldn't tell only by guess. Hain't got no clock where I stayed last night. I thought 'twas that late quite a bit ago, 'cause I'm getting hungry and I want my dinner."

The boy turned about and was walking off.

"Hold on there. I ain't done with you yet, and I don't want none of your running off."

Toby faced about and stood still, looking at the unsmooth ruffian in affected wonderment.

"Now," said Brian, coming close to him and looking him sharply in the face. "I'm after a runaway girl what come this way, and I want to know if you've seen her. Come, you imp, speak."

Brian shook the little fellow soundly.

"Yes, I'll tell; but I can do it best my own way. I'll get at it more natural so."

"Now see here," said Brian, with a movement as though he sought to lift his chin from his breast. "I want you to jest answer what I ask, d'ye hear?"

"Yes, sir," screamed Toby, dancing with pain, for the fellow held him in no gentle grip.

"Now about this 'ere girl."

To all Brian's questions Toby gave evasive replies.

Finally Brian released his hold of the boy.

"Won't you tell me," said Toby, "who 'tis you want to find? P'raps I'll come across her, then you'll come down with the skinners, won't you?"

Brian was walking away when these words of Toby, shouted at the top of his voice, arrested his steps.

He cried out:

"I'll give you a guinea if you'll find that girl, and tell me, so as I can git my hands on her."

Toby bounded away to catch up with the hurrying Brian.

"What's the girl's name?" he asked, as soon as he came up with him. "I want to know just for curiosity's sake."

"Her name's Griselda Lyell, an' if she says 'tain't, she speaks falsely."

"I don't believe it," was Toby's mental reply as he followed Brian away under pretence of aiding him in his search, but in reality to learn what his designs would be when he should become convinced that his intended victim had escaped.

While the colloquy between Brian and Toby was being held the maiden sat upon a block of stone a few feet from the entrance of the passage, which in this part was a wide, hall-like space, the steps by which the ascent to the castle was made being farther back.

She sat with clasped hands and prayerful, uplifted eyes while the two outside were conversing.

When she realised that she was saved, that Brian, purposely misled by the brave little Toby, had gone away, her pale, beautiful face became radiant with joy and gratitude.

At the expiration of about half an hour Toby returned to announce that Brian had proceeded towards the railway station to ascertain, if possible, whether she whom he sought, and for whose blood he thirsted, had gone on to take the train.

Under the maiden's direction Toby went at once to Sunset Cottage. The journey was made without accident of any kind. Mrs. Leasage had been in a state of wildest alarm ever since the moment when the maiden's cry had called her into the little parlour, which she reached just as Griselda fled from the room, and just, too, as Brian, having broken in the window, was about to enter it. She was rejoiced beyond measure at the good news Toby had for her.

Brian had persisted in the belief that the maiden was concealed somewhere in the house, hence the reason of his tardiness in following her.

Toby returned to the glen as he had come, by a circuitous route, bringing with him two bundles.

The first one opened contained a most appetising luncheon, which the hungry girl enjoyed.

Having satisfied the cravings of appetite, she opened the remaining bundle, and took therefrom some wearing apparel. Her toilette completed, she was deliberating upon the next step to be taken, when a sound as of heavy footsteps descending the stone stairs of the passage reached her ears. Some one was surely coming slowly, cautiously down the steps.

Instantly all power of motion forsook her. The sound approached nearer and nearer, and soon a pair of eyes, bright and scintillating even through the gloom, met her gaze.

Overcome by terror, expecting only instant death, Griselda did not faint, but waited with closed eyes for Brian Pilky and his murderous knife.

(To be continued.)

THE POISONED TONGUE.—It is the custom in Africa for hunters when they have killed a poisonous snake to cut off its head and carefully bury it deep in the ground. A naked foot stepping on one of these fangs would be fatally wounded. The poison would spread in a very short time all through the system. This venom lasts a long time, and is as deadly after the snake is dead as before. The cruel Indians used to dip the points of their arrows in this poison—so if they made the least wound their victim would be sure to die. The snake's poison is in its teeth; but there is something quite as dangerous, and much more common in communities, which has its poison on its tongue. Indeed, your chances of escape from a serpent are greater. The worst snakes usually glide away in fear at the approach of man, unless disturbed or attacked. But this creature, whose poison lurks in his tongue, attacks without provocation, and follows up his victim with untiring perseverance. We will tell you his name, so you will always be able to shun him. He is called Slanderer. He poisons worse than a serpent. Often his venom strikes to the life of a whole family or neighbourhood, destroying all peace and confidence.

SUDDEN DEATHS.—Many persons are not well informed, apparently, as to the causes that accelerate sudden deaths. At least so we are advised by a learned physician, whose theory is well worthy the consideration of every one. He says the causes that lead to sudden death are numerous, but in nine cases out of ten death would not result if the sufferers were properly cared for at the time they were attacked. For instance, a person, apparently enjoying good health, is prostrated in the street by dizziness, faintness, etc. Such persons are generally picked up, carried into some house and set up in a chair, or perchance, set up on a doorstep. These attacks are produced by a stoppage of circulation of blood. The doubling up of the body, or the sitting-up posture, tends to still further prevent circulation and keeps blood from the heart, and death naturally ensues in a few minutes. If the persons thus afflicted and prostrated were placed in a reclining position, and efforts made to reproduce circulation, we would not be compelled to re-

cord half so many sudden deaths. The advice of our medical friend is certainly worthy of consideration, and, if needs be, practice whenever demanded.

TRESSILIAN COURT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Life at Stake," "The House of Secrets," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE first impulse of Jasper Lowder, on beholding his wronged young wife, was the usual impulse of the coward—that of flight. But the shock of beholding her at Tressilian Court, in the very hour of his triumph, seemed to have paralysed all his energies. Her joyous, hysterical cries sounded in his ears like the crash of the falling avalanche hastening to overwhelm him. When she leaped from the cab and ran towards him with outstretched arms, still crying out in her panning voice, but with face transfigured with her sudden rapture, all things seemed to reel around him. He clutched at the little open park gate, and stared at her with appalled and appalling gaze.

She came onward, joy, surprise, and rapture glowing in every feature.

"Oh, Jasper!" she panted, in an ecstatic voice. "I have found you. They have made me believe you dead. They told me you were an idiot. See! I am wearing mourning for you, Jasper, my husband."

By this time she had reached the gate. She pulled it still farther ajar; she rushed through the aperture, and caught Lowder in a frantic grasp.

He continued to stare at her with wild, horrified eyes. If his thoughts and wishes had been daggers, the poor young creature would have been slain where she stood.

But she crept up to him, unheeding his looks or his silence, conscious only that she had found him. She caught his cold, benumbed hand to her lips, deluging it with kisses. Sobbing and moaning in the very abandonment of joy, she crept still closer, and laid her head in its mourning garb against his breast.

Then he sprang back as if a serpent had bitten him.

The one thought that possessed him was to deceive her as to his identity, as he had deceived Sir Arthur Tressilian and Blanche. He would impose upon her also with his monstrous cheat. He would play his game with a high hand, and carry out the part he had begun to act in his new character as Guy Tressilian. Hester had not seen him for a twelvemonth. The task certainly could not be difficult.

"You are mistaken, madam," he therefore ejaculated, hoarsely, trying to summon a look of ordinary astonishment to his blanched face. "I do not know you. My name is Guy Tressilian."

The poor young woman recoiled a few paces, and regarded him with wide and frightened eyes.

"Oh, Jasper!" she cried, in her sobbing, pitiful voice. "Oh, my darling! Don't you know me—me, your own Hester, your little wife?"

Lowder caught at the low park paling.

"This is some singular mistake," he muttered. "I can't understand it. You take me for Jasper Lowder, perhaps. We looked like brothers. Are you the person to whom I wrote from Marseilles? Are you Mrs. Hester Lowder?"

"Oh, you know I am, Jasper!" Hester cried, piteously. "How strange you seem. Don't you know I am your own wife, dearest, your own little Hester?"

Again she crept nearer to him, with loving, appealing gaze, and again Lowder recoiled before her, stepping into the shadow of the trees and out of sight of the amazed cabman.

"Pardon me, madam," said Lowder, harshly. "Is it impossible to convince you of your mistake? I am not he whom you seek. I am Guy Tressilian, son of Sir Arthur Tressilian of Tressilian Court. I don't know you. I never saw you before. I have never been married in my life. If you are not mad, you will acknowledge yourself mistaken, and take your departure."

Poor Hester was almost staggered at this speech. She looked at him with a wild, keen scrutiny. Jasper Lowder imagined that he had browbeaten her into doubt and uncertainty. He did not comprehend the deathless love of a pure and devoted wife. He did not know that a score of years, added to the single twelvemonth of their separation, would have been insufficient to obliterate his image from her heart. He did not know that every change in his blue eyes, every wave in his tawny hair, every line on his fair and handsome face, every gesture of his hands, were as familiar to her as the laugh of her little child—far more familiar.

"I repeat," ejaculated Lowder, "that I never saw you before; that I do not know you; that I am not married! Shall I call your cabman?"

He paused, as a look of wild affright came into Hester Lowder's eyes. The anxious, nervous face of the poor wife grew very pale; her lips trembled. "He is mad!" she whispered. "Sir Arthur was right. Jasper is mad!"

She forced a smile to her quivering mouth, but still with the affrighted look in her eyes, and gently advancing a step nearer to him, she said, piteously:

"Poor Jasper! You had a serious hurt in that terrible shipwreck. To think you shouldn't know me!" and she tried to smile at the absurdity of the non-recognition, but the smile was but the mockery of one. "And you don't remember me, darling."

"Of course I don't," said Lowder, sullenly. "This is an extraordinary hallucination."

"Don't you remember the baby either?" persisted the young wife, in a quivering voice, and with a look of pitiful beseeching. "Oh, darling! Don't you remember our boy, our little blue-eyed, fair-haired boy? Little baby, you know. He can say 'papa' now, in the sweetest little cooing voice, and he is your image, Jasper. Surely you remember baby?"

The voice of poor Hester was soft and low and "cooing" as the voice of her little child, but Lowder detected the heartbreak in it—all the awful anguish of a soul thrown back on itself and utterly rejected by the one it worships.

In spite of himself, the guilty man's face changed. The lines about his mouth twitched nervously. His poor, disowned young wife was tugging at the very chords of his wretched soul.

The anxious pleader beside him fancied that his memory was trying to assert itself.

"Try to remember, darling!" she said, softly. "I have come to take you away from here. Baby and I want you. Only think! We believed you were dead, and lying under the cruel waves! Mr. Tressilian wrote me so. When I read that letter I was wild with despair. I thought I should die. I gave up my situation as governess, you know, dear, and I got our baby from its nurse, and I came as soon as I was able to bear the journey—for the news made me ill—to England. Mr. Tressilian forgot to tell me where the accident occurred, and I wanted to ask him about you and your last days, and to thank him for his kindness to me. He sent me a hundred pounds, dear. So I came from Gloucester in a cab to Tressilian Court, and I saw Sir Arthur—"

"Curse you!" said Lowder, with a start. "You saw Sir Arthur?"

"Yes," the poor wife faltered. "How noble and grand he is! He was very kind to me. I told him my wretched story; I showed him the letter his son sent me from Marseilles—that false, cruel letter—"

Lowder gave a gasp of horror.

Had Hester given to the baronet a clue to the truth?

"What did you say? What did you tell him?" he gasped.

"You know him then?" questioned Hester. "He told me you were still in Sicily. What object could he have in deceiving me? Father and son are both alike—both false and cruel. Why, I was about to start for Sicily, and they knew all the while that you were here!"

"What—what did Sir Arthur say when he saw that letter?"

"He said his son probably wanted to spare me the worse grief of finding you an idiot. But you are not an idiot, darling—"

"No, but I shall be if I have to listen to your singular appeals much longer, madam," said Lowder, in a hoarse, discordant voice. "For the twentieth time, let me tell you that I am not Jasper Lowder; that I don't know you—"

"Poor Jasper!" said the young wife, soothingly, patting his hand softly, and looking up at him with tender, piteous eyes, full of wild beseeching.

It was impossible to deceive her in regard to her husband's identity, Lowder comprehended with the dull chill of despair. He could not cheat a love like this.

What was to be done? He resolved that he would die before he would give up his fortune, his position—and Blanche. Even in this hour, when the obstacle between him and Sir Arthur's ward rose up like a solid wall of rock, he dared to think of innocent Blanche.

He looked down into Hester Lowder's face. It was a simple, honest, tender face, not beautiful, but delicate and sweet. Her low brows were shaded by brown hair; her blue eyes, not lovely in themselves, but glowing with the loveliness of her true and untainted soul, were full of anxious entreaty; her mouth quivered with a pitiful, brave little smile; and all her features were alight with the tender, pitying, wifely love she felt for her treacherous husband.

In spite of his anger, Lowder's heart was touched. He had not dreamed that she loved him so well.

At that moment flashed upon him the idea how to rid himself of her without noise or scandal, and

without confessing his wretched imposture and false position.

He glanced out from the shadows where he was standing, and beheld the cabman still seated on his box, with his perplexed face turned towards the park, in expectation of Mrs. Lowder's return.

Stepping back farther into the gloom, Lowder clapped his hands to his head; then, with a sudden theatrical start, he ejaculated, as in consternation:

"Hester!"

The poor little woman gave a sob of joy.

"He knows me! He knows me!" she cried, ecstatically. "He is not mad!"

"No, I am not mad," said Lowder, but there was a look in his eyes before which poor Hester shrank. "I am in my right mind now, Hester, although I am subject to fits of mental aberration since that terrible shipwreck. How came you here?"

Hester repeated the story she had already told him. "Yes, yes," he commented, when she had concluded. "Mr. Tressilian wrote to you that I was dead to spare you the anguish of knowing me insane. But I began to recover after he left Sicily. Part of the time sane and part of the time demented, I have made my way to England in search of my friend and benefactor. I have not seen him yet. I have but to-day arrived in the vicinity of Tressilian Court."

"My poor darling! But why did you not come directly to me—to your own wife?" asked Hester.

"Because I had some fancy that Mr. Tressilian would get me medical aid," said the hypocrite. "I had sense enough to keep from you until I could present myself wholly in my right mind."

This explanation, and the sudden recognition of her, clumsy as both were, completely deceived the honest-hearted, trusting young wife. Jasper Lowder had been great and noble and perfect in her eyes. She was not keen or suspicious enough to see that he was acting a part. The utter improbability that he should recover control of his mind at such a juncture, and recognise her after the manner he had done, did not even occur to her in her great joy.

"But you know me now, Jasper?" she said, pressing closer to his side.

"Yes, Hester."

"Oh, thank Heaven!" the poor young creature sobbed. "I have suffered so much, Jasper. I thought I had lost you, darling. Have you seen Sir Arthur and Mr. Tressilian yet?"

"Not yet. Did you see Mr. Guy—Mr. Tressilian?"

"No," answered the unsuspecting Hester. "He is out somewhere," his father said. "He would soon be in."

"Where are you stopping, Hester?"

"At Gloucester, at the Crown Hotel. Baby is there, Jasper."

"Is he? Well, you are a pair of babies wandering about together. You know about as much of the world as baby himself. Shut up in a prim, strict boarding-school until you were grown up, then sent immediately abroad as governess to a family residing in Munich, you are as innocent of knowing the ways of the world as any infant. I wonder you dared take the journey to England alone."

"A woman dare do almost anything for one she loves," returned the young wife, simply.

"Yes? I don't doubt it now, my fierce little robin. I have told you that I am still occasionally subject to fits of mental aberration. I must see a doctor as soon as may be. But first I must see my old friend and employer, Mr. Tressilian. As for you, Hester, you must go back to the Crown Hotel and wait for me."

"Oh, Jasper! Will you not go with me?"

"I cannot. Have I not implied that I will come to you? You must go alone, and say nothing to any one that you have seen me. If you want to set up your authority over mine, say so. But I swear to you, Hester, that when you cease to be ruled by me I will cast you off! If you obey me, well. If not, you will alienate me from you irrevocably."

This alternative was too terrible for the poor wife. She sobbed out her readiness to obey him implicitly.

"Very well then. Go back to Gloucester immediately. I will visit you within an hour of your return to your hotel. Not a word to any one about me. Remember!"

"And you, Jasper?"

"I must see Mr. Tressilian first. Are you going?"

The wife hesitated, took a step or two, then returned, saying, wistfully:

"Jasper, you forgot to kiss me!"

Lowder bent towards her and kissed her coldly. There had been a time when Hester's true heart and Hester's loving eyes had made his life sweet; but that time was past. The glamour of a more passionate affection was upon him now, and to win Blanche he would have ruthlessly sacrificed this loving, trusting wife.

Hester returned the caress with a long, clinging embrace, then, with stifled sobs, turned and left him. She opened the low park gate, and approached the cab with her heavy crape veil drawn over her face.

The cabman sprang from his box to assist her, helped her into the vehicle, and slammed the door shut.

"Back to the hotel," said Mrs. Lowder, in a stifled voice.

The cabman remounted his box, and the vehicle again went bowling on its way towards Gloucester. Jasper Lowder looked after it from his covert with a fearful scowl.

"This is a strange hitch in my schemes, a frightful miscarriage of my plans," he muttered. "Who would have supposed that timid creature would have plucked up spirit and courage to come to England? Was there ever a madder movement than her abandonment of her situation and setting out with a young child on a fool's errand? Why did she not write to the address of Guy Tressilian, as any one else would have done? Is this foolish, unnecessary visit a fatality? Does it portend evil to me? Confound the woman! Why didn't she die when she got the tidings of my death? She is one of those shrinking, dependent, loving women to die of a broken heart, and I don't see why she didn't."

He breathed a malediction against poor Hester that would have curdled her blood could she have heard it.

"I met the emergency cleverly," he said to himself, after a pause, the cab having vanished from his sight. "That was a clever thought. I'll ponder it over, and add details to give it a genuine look. She must not suspect that I am personating Guy Tressilian. She must believe Guy to be here in his own proper person, and she must believe me his hanger-on, his secretary, anything! I'll get the idea before I see her. She won't dare to doubt me, even if she were not so unsuspecting."

Then he set out on his return to the Court, a vicious, deadly scowl still blackening his visage.

"First of all," he thought, going slowly onward. "I must see what mischief she has done in the mind of Sir Arthur. Rather awkward situation this of mine. Sir Arthur is the soul of honour. He hates a lie. He said yesterday that lying was the lowest of all the vices; that it betokened a cowardly, treacherous, and degraded soul. A liar, he said, could not be a gentleman, for no man with any sense of honour would degrade himself by a deliberate falsehood. Lying was always my forte. And here I stand convicted in his sight of not only one lie, but several. I told him that Jasper Lowder had not a friend in the world to my knowledge. And here Hester showed him my letter, signed Guy Tressilian, and declaring a knowledge that some sort of relationship existed between her and 'Lowder.' Lie number one. Then I wrote to Hester that 'Lowder' was drowned and dead. I told Sir Arthur that 'Lowder' lived and was an idiot. The discrepancy between these two statements must strike him as lie number two. I wonder what he'll say to me."

Impatient to have the expected scene over, Lowder quickened his pace and soon arrived at the Court.

He searched for Sir Arthur in the library and drawing-room, and eventually found him in the pleasant morning-room, the *Times* still on his knee.

"All alone, father?" said Lowder, airily, flinging himself into a chair by the fire. "Where is Blanche?"

"Still busy with some poor pensioner," answered Sir Arthur. "Blanche never neglects her poor."

"That is one of her finest traits," remarked Lowder. "By the way, father, Joseph met me in the hall as I was taking off my great-coat and he says a lady called to see me while I was out. Can you tell me who she was?"

"Yes; I saw her," said the baronet. "She is Mrs. Hester Lowder, the wife of your friend, Jasper Lowder."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the usurper, in apparent astonishment. "His wife! Why, he never told me he was married! He asked me, on that night of our shipwreck, to write to a certain Mrs. Hester Lowder, at Munich, in case anything happened to him, but he did not say what relationship she bore to him. I fancied that she was a prim widow lady, who was connected to him only by some distant marriage. And she is his wife! How odd that he never said that he was married! Why, I wrote to her a letter of condolence from Marseilles, sending her a hundred pounds, under the impression that she was some superannuated aunt-in-law whom he supported."

"I saw your letter," said the baronet, briefly. "She desired me to thank you for your kindness to her. But, Guy," and the brown eyes looked at him in sorrowing sternness, "how came you to write to her that poor Lowder was dead?"

"It was wrong," admitted Lowder, with great apparent frankness. "But I thought to spare the poor old dame a worse sorrow."

"You told me," said Sir Arthur, "that Lowder had no relatives."

"Did I? That must have been because I was not sure that the supposed old lady was really a relative. I wish I could have seen the poor woman. Is she stopping at Ardleigh?"

"No, at Gloucester. She means to leave for the Continent to-night. I am afraid her husband had a bad spot in him, Guy, since he never mentioned his wife to you. She is a gentle, timid little woman, but true and honest. I liked her. I think, Guy, you had better go over to Gloucester to see her. She wanted much to talk with you, and you can prepare her for the sad spectacle that will meet her in Sicily."

"It is a good idea. I will go," said Lowder, arising, as if he had not had all the while the intention of going. "Please make my excuses to Blanche, as I shall not be back to luncheon, and must forego my ride with her to Colonel Egerton's."

Sir Arthur nodded, and Lowder withdrew. A little later he came noisily down the stairs, mounted his thoroughbred, and rode swiftly down the avenue.

The baronet looked after him, still with that sternly sorrowful look.

"That is my son!" he said to himself. "That is the husband I have picked out for Blanche, and whom she loves! A man infected with the fashionable vice of lying! Now that I know he has that plague-spot I cannot trust him as I did. Ah, it is a sad and bitter hour for a father when he learns to distrust his only and idolised son! I cannot get rid of the impression that he is false all through his nature. How his foreign life has changed him! I must study him yet more closely and keenly."

CHAPTER XXVI.

ABOUT a mile distant from the city of Naples, in the direction of the great volcano, and upon a rising ground, stood, and possibly still stands, the small hostelry known as the "Vesuvius" inn.

At a little distance from the road, flanked on one side by a small grove of thrifty orange trees, and on the other by a small and equally thrifty vineyard, the inn had a peculiarly peaceful and inviting appearance. Over the low doorway swung a sign on which was inscribed in quaint black letters the name of the inn—"Albergo del Vesuvio."

The inn was patronised for the most part by country people, on their way to or from the great town, but there were many foreigners who, for the sake of the pure air, the delicious fruits, and the charming scenery, stopped for days, and even weeks, at the "Vesuvius" inn. The hostelry, therefore, was in the highest degree prosperous, and its owner, Giuditte Carvelli, was looked upon as quite a wealthy woman.

As a natural consequence, she had had many suitors, but she had rejected them all, declaring that he whom she should marry must possess a certain annual income, and this requirement but few of her suitors had been able to meet.

So one by one her admirers had dropped away, despairing of winning her hand or a share in the receipts of the inn. Giuditte had made up her mind that she should never marry, but remain always at her post, assisted by her younger brother, a half-witted lad of some sixteen years, when a former suitor of hers—no other than Jacopo Palestro, the Palermo scrivener—made his appearance from Sicily, with the funds Jasper Lowder had given him, and renewed his offer to her of marriage.

As he displayed his money, Giuditte considered his proposal. She coquetted with his hopes and fears for a day or two, then insisted upon knowing the source of his income that she might judge of the probability of its continuance. With her woman's wiles she soon drew from Palestro the whole secret. Having a scheming brain, and accepting his theory that Lowder and Tressilian were really brothers, of whom one stood in the way of the other, she did not under-estimate the importance of the secret. Considering it a mine of riches, if well worked, and desiring a partner in her cares and anxieties, she decided that she could not do better than to marry the scrivener.

Accordingly, as we know, she had married him.

Upon the afternoon on which Miss Rymple, her attendants, and Guy Tressilian landed at Naples, and at about the same moment that the little party bade adieu to Captain Ricardo of the felucca and set out in a *voiture* for the "Vesuvius" inn, Jacopo Palestro stood in his open doorway, under his creaking sign, and glanced about him with an air of the most intense satisfaction.

His personal appearance had greatly improved since leaving Sicily. His powerful but under-sized figure was attired in the glossiest black garments. His swarthy countenance wore an habitual smirk, but it is doubtful if this could be termed an improvement.

He stepped out in the shade of the mulberry tree, for the sun's rays were warm, and sat down at one of the tables, drumming upon it listlessly with his fingers.

He was thus engaged when his bride, making her appearance from an inner room, came out and took the place he had just vacated in the doorway.

She was a buxom woman, of some five or six and twenty, with a well-developed figure, and a

face that might have been handsome but for its insolent expression and latent fierceness. Her complexion was a degree less swarthy than Palestro's, and she wore golden hoops in her ears of immense size, drooping nearly to her shoulders. Her hair, black as coal, was gathered smoothly about her head, and ornamented with strings of tiny gold coins, which jingled like fairy castanets with her every movement. Her attire was sufficiently picturesque, consisting of a bright blue skirt and a scarlet bodice laced with gold cord down both front and back.

"It's a dull day, Jacopo," she observed. "No customers for the last hour. We shall have no more to-day, I think, for it is getting late."

"We have not done badly, Giuditte," returned the scrivener, smiling. "Let us do so well every day, and we shall be rich people. But, as you say, the tide of travel is spent for to-day. A few of the neighbouring country people will drop in this evening, as usual, but that will be all we can count upon."

"Is it not time for you to hear from your kinswoman, the Signora Vicini?" inquired Giuditte. "It is long since you have heard."

"Yes, it is ten days or more. The letter was written by a young English lady in Teresa's name. That I know, although the young lady never saw me, and did not mention in the letter who acted as scrivener."

"But you have seen her, Jacopo?"

"Yes, once. She was a beautiful young lady, but she couldn't compare with you, my Giuditte," declared the fatterer. "Her name was Rymple, I think. She was a *miladi*."

"And rich, no doubt," said Giuditte. "These Ingleses are always rich. It is odd, is it not, that Teresa Vicini does not write? Perhaps the Ingleses is dead."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Palestro, hastily. "He could not die and cheat me of my income. Oh, no!"

"If not dead, perhaps this *miladi*'s father or guardian has taken charge of him," persisted Giuditte. "They may even be going to remove him to England."

"Ah, impossible!" again ejaculated Palestro.

"This silence is certainly strange. I wish this rare bird of ours, this golden goose, were in our keeping," said Giuditte, with a restless glitter of her bead-like eyes. "To tell you the truth, Jacopo, I am uneasy lest something should occur to wrest our prize from us."

"But we could not keep him here, with people coming and going," said the scrivener, uneasily. "We have many Ingleses stopping for wine and fruits, and often to spend days and weeks, because we ask less and give better accommodations than the great hotels of Naples. The Ingleses might be seen—might be recognised."

"True; then we should lose him, and our income with him. But I don't feel safe with him in Sicily. He should be nearer as, hidden safely somewhere among the mountains. I know a safe retreat for him."

"With the Red Carvelli?"

"Hush!" Giuditte whispered. "Do not speak that name here. No one knows that I am friendly with my brother, the Red Carvelli. People think I have disowned him for his crimes. They think he never comes here. Ah, ha! If they knew—if they knew!"

"Yes, if they knew," echoed Palestro, grimly. "There's many a golden coin flows into our money box from the hands of the Red Carvelli. No one suspects that we give him information of travellers."

"Hush! oh, hush!" cried Giuditte. "The very trees might whisper the secret! But about this idiot Ingleses. You shall go to Sicily and bring him away."

"How can I? He was left by his rascally brother in the hands of the Vicinis. Teresa won't give him up. She likes him, and gets pay for taking care of him."

"Then steal him away," said Giuditte. "Our treasure is not safe there. He may be seen. He may wander away. Some one may take pity on him. He must be brought here. You could hire a vessel of some sort, and steal the unfortunate as he wanders on the rocks. Teresa and Tomaso will think him drowned. I will undertake to find a hiding-place for him."

At this juncture a *cofre* was seen approaching. "It's coming here," said Giuditte, regarding it narrowly. "Some tourist who wants to lodge cheaply while seeing the sights of Naples and exploring the volcano. Some artist to paint the Bay; some person to visit the ruins of Pompeii."

Her speculations were cut short by the near proximity of the *voiture*. It drove up to the outer edge of the lawn, and came to a halt. The driver sprang down, and opened the door.

Seeing that a lady was within, Giuditte came forward according to her usual habit with smiles of welcome. As became an inn proprietor, Palestro

also advanced with a bland and hospitable countenance.

As the reader knows, the new-comers were Olla, Guy Tressilian, and the faithful Popleys.

Jim Popley sprang out first—he had sat inside at the request of his young mistress—and gave his hand to Miss Rymple. The young girl jumped out lightly. Mrs. Popley followed. Last of all came Tressilian.

At sight of him Palestro uttered an exclamation of consternation. He knew the young man at once, and, fearful of betraying his wonder and amazement at his appearance, the scrivener fled into the house.

Giuditte marked his disappearance with a frown, but escorted the new arrivals into the inn, to a quiet parlour reserved for ladies.

"We shall want rooms, signora, for the night," said Olla, with an air of quiet dignity. "We have come to your inn for the sake of quietude, and shall resume our journey to-morrow."

"Yes, *miladi*," said Giuditte, obsequiously, noting that although the travellers had little luggage their appearance declared that the young lady was wealthy and aristocratic.

Guy's appearance puzzled her a little as he fixed his great, blue, melancholy eyes upon her, but she concluded that he had been ill; that he was either the lover or the brother of the beautiful young lady, and that the Popleys were their servants.

"We shall want three or four rooms on the same floor," said Olla, in her prompt, decisive way. "A sitting-room and two or three bedrooms. My maid," and she indicated Mrs. Popley, "will share my room."

"Yes, *miladi*," said Giuditte, volubly. "I have the very rooms you want. As near a sitting-room as you would find at the *Hôtel Crocette*, if I do say it, and nice beds with clean linen freshly made up. The rooms are ready, signorina. Shall I show you to them?"

Olla assented, and Giuditte conducted the new-comers up a flight of stairs to the second floor, and ushered them into the suite of rooms she had mentioned.

Olla expressed her approbation of the apartments, and ordered a supper to be served in the sitting-room as soon as possible.

"The sea air gives one an appetite," she said, taking off her hat and saque, as Popley conducted Tressilian to the farther room of the suite.

"The signorina has come a sea voyage then?" questioned the shrewd Giuditte.

"Yes," was the brief response. "My servants will take their supper below, signora, while I and my friend are having ours up here. Bring a bottle of *Lachryma Christi*. That is all I think."

She dismissed her hostess with a courteous little nod, and Giuditte, taking the hint, withdrew.

Not until she was downstairs and in her kitchen did she remember that she had not inquired the names of her singular guests.

"I will do so when I take up the supper," she muttered. "I wonder if they will not stay longer than to-morrow. Can they not want to see Vesuvius, Pompeii, nor anything of interest about Naples? Bah! What pigs are these Ingleses! They rush through a country, and say then that they have 'travelled.' She wants *Lachryma Christi*, does she? Then she has money. I wonder now what route they will take when they leave Naples? Where can Jacopo be? The wretch—"

"Here he is, my Giuditte!" exclaimed the scrivener, emerging from a pantry near at hand. "Tell me, have the strangers gone up to their rooms?"

"Ay, they have," replied Giuditte, crossly. "Have you ever robbed them, that you run away at sight of them?"

"No; but listen, Giuditte. That young lady, with the air of a young princess, is the signorina I told you of—the Signorina Rymple."

"Is it possible?" Giuditte whispered, in astonishment.

"Yes; and the Ingleses, the young gentleman with eyes like the blue of our own Italian skies and the hair of gold, who do you think he may be? He is our 'golden goose,' Giuditte! He is the Signora Lowdair, on whose account I get my fine income. They must have lured him away from Teresa."

"Can it be?" exclaimed Giuditte. "Why, we had only to wish him here, and behold he comes! The Inglesina says they must go on in the morning."

"We shall have something to say about that," asserted Palestro, with a look of dark determination. "Fate has sent this poor Ingleses into my hands. I shall be a fool to let him go. Mark me, Giuditte! the Ingleses signore does not quit my keeping from this hour. I shall separate him from the signorina. Henceforth he shall know me as his guardian and master!"

Giuditte assented with sparkling eyes, and the two began to plot in whispers while the woman worked.

(To be continued.)

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. MORIEL C.-1. The twenty-third day of February, 1841, fell upon a Tuesday. 2 The handwriting is very good.

HERALD.—It would be no part of our duty to publish the name of the bearer of the crest. You can consult the large edition of the "Peerage."

MARY.—1. Use turpentine, and restore the pile depressed with rubbing by steaming over hot water. 2. The handwriting is sufficiently good.

RED NOSE.—Try the effect of tonic medicines, bracing exercise, and a more generous diet. Outward applications will not avail you.

JOHN W.—Your son will probably gain strength in the course of time if he pay due regard to his diet and exercise. Having been under a surgeon's care, he can dismiss any morbid apprehensions of chronic injury from his mind.

A COUNTRYMAN.—In the year 1800 the price of bread in London was for a short time as high as 1s. 10d. a loaf. The loaf then weighed 4lb. 5oz. The proportionate value of the four-pound loaf was less than half the above price when the corn laws were repealed in 1846.

EGLENTINE.—1. The sixteenth volume of THE LONDON READER commenced with No. 392. 2 Dandruff may be prevented by attention to diet and exercise with a view to the promotion of a proper action of the skin. Cleanliness is always indispensable; the head should, therefore, be occasionally washed or shampooed.

AUBREY.—You should endeavour to find an instructor in your own city. Take lessons of him or her, and then make application to the local authorities, using such influence and recommendations as you are able to command. It would be injudicious of you to come to London unless you have friends in the metropolis.

D. G.—The use of the ballot for electioneering purposes was very well known in ancient times. About a century and a half before the Christian era the Romans made a law by which the ballot was the method appointed to elect magistrates. You cannot, therefore, very well argue against the scheme on the score of novelty.

EMMA.—Probably it is a shorn hare-skin; for after a hare-skin has been submitted to the process of shaving it presents quite a new appearance. Previously, the colour was brown all over; after shearing, the colour is jet black down the whole of the back, and gradually becomes fainter towards the sides of the skin.

L. K. J.-1. Mix a pint of ox-gall with two gallons of cold water. Rub it on the carpet with a brush, and wash off the latter thereby produced with clean water. Then dry by rubbing with a clean cloth. 2. The handwriting is very nice and legible, but much commendation cannot be awarded to its style.

ROBERT B.—Your question appears to belong to that category in which it is to be found an old-fashioned query which seeks to make out that there is some connection between the moon and green cheese. We are afraid you will learn what it is to be footsore in the course of your travels in pursuit of the required ingredients, concerning the nature of which we have no knowledge.

L. A.—You will not gain any benefit by the perusal of such pamphlets. If there is any sincerity in your desire to improve, the course to be adopted is very simple. Resolutely abandon the habit you deplore, avoid stimulants and idleness, take wholesome food at regular hours, proper exercise, and an occasional change of scene. Try also to find some good companion.

N. D.—There has not been, we are happy to say, much heard about Garroter lately. The word is derived from the Spanish; "garote" being the name given in Spain to one method of capital punishment. The criminal is seated on a stool with his back to a stake, and his neck is encircled with an iron collar, which the executioner closes by means of a screw and thus causes death.

LOUISE.—The great actor Garrick died at the commencement of the year 1778. Two or three years previously he sold his share in Drury Lane Theatre for thirty-seven thousand pounds, soon after which he took leave of the stage. It was Dr. Johnson who said that Garrick's death "eclipsed the gaiety of nations and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure."

SALLY.—You have mistaken the sense in which the word is used in the quoted passage. It is not the jewel known by the name of garnet which is there referred to, but a tackle fixed to the mainstay of a ship for hoisting cargo. The word "garnet" has two meanings, each very different from the other. You should tell your sailor sweetheart that it is not the tackle you wish for, but the ring simply, that is, an engaged ring with a garnet stone.

Of course, if he will, he can look upon such a present as a figurative "tackle," by which to bind your heart and yourself to him until he returns from his sea voyage. It will then be high time that you should be "spiced." Three rings would not be an inordinate quantity of jewels for a young lassie to possess. She might name them the tackling ring, the splicing ring, and the keeper ring.

JOHN H.—Sherbet powder is composed of the following: Half a pound of powdered white sugar, four ounces of tartaric acid, four ounces of carbonate of soda, forty drops of essence of lemon. First add the lemon essence to the sugar, then add the other ingredients. Be careful to mix well and to keep free from damp. When used, the proportion is two teaspoonfuls to one-third of a pint of spring water.

S. P. F.—A great deal of training is requisite to make a good artilleryman. In addition to the physical capabilities required some very accurate calculations have to be made. The fuse used for firing shells has to be cut to a length proportioned to the intended range of the shell, so that it may explode the instant that the shell comes into contact with its object. A thirteen-inch fuse burns forty seconds.

E. N.—The pecuniary indemnity agreed to be paid by France at the close of the war in 1815 amounted to about thirty millions sterling. The surrounding and antecedent circumstances are widely differed from those which have recently transpired that a comparison is hardly possible. Amongst other and more important considerations the diminished purchasing power of a pound sterling should be taken into account.

G. E. R.—There is no fee payable upon the registration of a birth, provided that the registration is made within forty-two days of the birth. Neither is there any tax levied upon newly-born children. That description of tax, which was payable during the reign of William III., has long since been abolished. The amount imposed by the Act of 1695 was 30s. upon the birth of a nobleman and two shillings upon the birth of an ordinary mortal.

GOING HOME AT DARK.

Through each street and highway,
Through each lane and park.
Watch the crowds of earnest people
Going home at dark.

Some are clad in broadcloth,
Some in meager stuff;
Some are gentle, some are simple,
Some are rude and rough.

Yet in all their faces,
Spite of Nature's mark,
Sits enthroned this sweet assurance,
Going home at dark.

Working girls, quite merry
At their glad release;
Happy that the waning sunset
Brings the hour of peace.

Though the meal be frugal,
Though the home be poor,
Some one watches for their coming,
Some one's love is sure! M. A. K.

B. N. E.—Between the years 1793 and 1804 France underwent six revolutions. It was in the latter year that the first Napoleon established the Empire. Robespierre was executed in 1794, and with his death ended the celebrated Reign of Terror. The number of victims furnished to the guillotine in the space of about a year is recorded to be 18,003, while upwards of an additional million were killed in other ways. Women and children suffered as well as men.

LAURA.—The order of the Garter holds the highest rank among the British orders of knighthood. It dates as far back as the year 1350. The habit and insignia are: The Garter of blue velvet, inscribed with the motto, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, worn below the left knee; the mantle of blue velvet; the hood and surcoat of crimson velvet; the hat of black velvet; the collar of gold; the figure of St. George suspended from a broad dark blue ribbon; and the star of silver.

ZETA.—The prices obtained for curiosities and rarities at an auction sale are no criterion of their value. They mark rather the eagerness of the purchaser and the desire to win under competitive circumstances. Fashion and fancy also influence the amount realised. Take for example a rare edition of a book. A copy of the first edition of Boccaccio's "Decamerone" was once purchased by a noble duke for 1,200*l.* Seven years later the very same volume sold for only 91*9s.* In these days a reprint of the work can be had for a very few shillings.

B. S.—The many replies we have previously written for you should assure you of our sympathy and respect. Two of your pieces now before us are full of the faults we have formerly pointed out. That entitled "The Most Beautiful" gives some promise of improvement. Yet it has errors of expression, is too abruptly concluded, and is moreover a very small affair. A different result might have been achieved by the employment of greater patience and deeper thought. Your industry may be too discursive.

JUN.—The anecdote is often quoted as an example of the power a conviction of truth has over the human mind. Few things force out a man's real sentiments so strongly as a deep sense of injustice. Galileo allowed himself to retract his opinion concerning the motion of the earth, and pronounced his abjuration kneeling before the tribunal. But as he rose from this posture he could not entirely restrain his indignation, for, stamping the ground with his foot, he murmured: "I do move, though." The Italian words which he used are reported to be: *E pur si muove.*

WM. W. H. (Leeds).—Your verses are too impersonal and have too little warmth to pass muster as an ode to that sort of love described as the passion which exists between the sexes. We presume they were written with this object, and yet, though you appeal to the soft breath of heaven, the stars, and birds, and conclude with a vague reference to sympathy, you bestow not one line upon the companion of your rapture. Silent rapture, and nature's

beauties, are pretty words, no doubt; yet of themselves they are inadequate to express what must have transpired in a true lover's walk. There is a rapture which others vouch, there are eyes in which all the beauties of nature are reflected and concentrated in order that they may absorb your soul by their devotion, there is a thrill which, passing from one to the other with the rapidity of lightning, causes both to forget in those moments that there exist any other beings or objects in the wide world. Felt you not the tenderness of her touch as she clung closer and yet closer to your side? Were your lips so far removed from hers that no perfume from her breath all but intoxicated you by its sweetness? Remember you nothing of the lingering adieu, nor of the charm and high resolve which the possession of her heart threw around your life? You should have sung of some such transports, and have used the beauties of the landscape as a setting for more glittering gems.

FLYING CLOUD, eighteen, 5ft. 9in., fair, blue eyes, and good looking. Respondent must be dark, good looking, fond of home, and able to love a seaman.

J. A. G., thirty-five, 5ft. 10in., dark, and respectfully connected. Respondent must be tall, dark, good looking, and in a good position; no objection to a widow.

MAINESTAY, twenty-two, 5ft. 7in., blue eyes, fair complexion, and in the Navy. Respondent must be dark, and about twenty; a native of London preferred.

ONE ENGLAND, twenty, 5ft. 9in., light hair, blue eyes, and in a good position. Respondent must be good looking, good tempered, fond of music, and have dark hair and eyes.

WALLACE, twenty-one, medium height, fair complexion, light hair, blue eyes, and respectfully connected. Respondent must be fair, ladylike, not over nineteen, and of a loving disposition.

SARAH AND EDITH.—"Sarah," nineteen, tall, dark, brown hair and eyes, loving, and domesticated. "Edith," eighteen, short, fair, gray eyes, light hair, loving, and domesticated. Respondents must be tall, dark, loving, cheerful, and fond of home; carpenters preferred.

J. B. W., twenty-two, 5ft. 8in., black hair, brown eyes, dark moustache, about commanding business for himself, wishes to correspond with a respectable young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be fair, and have a little money.

ANNIE AND BESSIE, twenty-five and twenty-two, medium height, with fair hair and eyes, would like to meet with two respectable young men as husbands; they would be found agreeable, good tempered, and would make industrious wives.

MAUDE AND ETHEL.—"Maude," tall, a blonde, good looking, loving, domesticated, fond of music and good society, and has a good income, with expectations. Respondent must be dark, young, well educated, good looking, and amiable. "Ethel," a brunette, handsome, fond of music and home. Respondent must be fair and young.

JACK BUNTING and **TOPSAIL SHEET BLOCK.**—"Jack Bunting," nineteen, 5ft. 5in., blue eyes, and fair complexion. "Topsail Sheet Block," twenty, 5ft. 7in., blue eyes, and dark complexion. Respondents must be domesticated, and about nineteen or twenty; natives of London preferred.

LAURETTA AND AURORA, two orphan sisters, desire to meet with suitable husbands. "Lauretta," twenty, tall, a brunette, handsome, and a good singer and pianist. "Aurora," eighteen, a blonde, blue eyes, and golden hair. Both domesticated, loving, fond of home, and will have money on their wedding-day. Respondents must be tall, well educated, and gentlemanly.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

FLYING SCUD is responded to by—"Nell," twenty-one, tall, dark, amiable, and good looking; and—"Kitty," eighteen, tall, brown hair and eyes, lively, and good tempered.

ELLA FITZGERALD by—"F. B. N.," thirty, tall, dark, with whiskers and moustache, fond of home, and loving. **DESDERONA** by—"Leonard," twenty, 5ft. 9in., light hair, blue eyes, and good looking.

AMELIA W. G. by—"George A.," tall, dark, good looking, with a few hundred pounds, and good expectations. **LIZIE** by—"N. J. B.," twenty-three, 5in 9in., good tempered, good looking, dark, and hazel eyes. **PATRICIA G. B.**—"Merry Mill," tall, fair, good looking, domesticated, and loving.

J. C. by—"Blanche," twenty-two, dark hair and eyes, rather stout, domesticated, and would make a loving little wife.

HARRY HALLIARDS by—"Laughing Lull," twenty, medium height, fair, pretty, good tempered, and able to love a sailor. **GILSON'S ROSE** by—"E. P.," twenty-six, 5ft. 6in., fair complexion, dark brown hair, and would make a good husband.

A. B. C. and D. E. F. write for the *cortes* of "J. K. L." and "G. H. J."

JAMES S. would like to receive the *cortes* of "M. H. G." **ADA OLIPHANT'S** request has been attended to.

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NOTICE.—Part 95, for APRIL, Now Ready, price 7d., with large Supplement Sheet of the Fashions for April.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

EMBROIDERED COLLAR, NECKTIE, PURSE, MUSLIN COLLAR, FICHU OF MULL MUSLIN AND LACE, &c., &c.

COLLAR IN EMBROIDERY.—No. 1.

This collar is worked in embroidery imitation of point lace on mull muslin foundation. To imitate the leaves of the illustration various stitches are used, viz., stop stitch, flat stitch, and lace stitch. The corner is trimmed with lace stitch and languette scallops, which, in a manner, form part of the collar.

NECKTIE.—No. 2.

This tie, for out-of-door wear, is of mauve corded silk, Valenciennes lace insertion, and lace.

CROCHET PURSE FOR LADIES.

No. 8.

This purse consists of two parts worked in crochet. Single stitch is employed, and the material is red silk braid. In the last rounds gold and crystal beads are introduced, and these are surrounded by chain stitch of the red silk braid. The upper rim is finished off with long stitch, and the purse closes with a handsome bronze snap, to which a chain is attached. The lower part is worked in guimpe. Join and surround with crochet loops. Line with red silk.



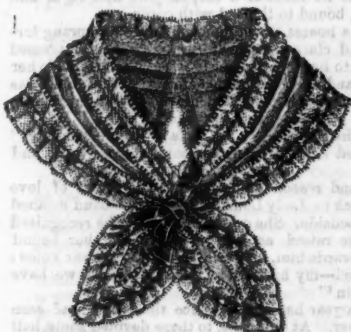
NECKTIE.—No. 2.

COLLAR IN EMBROIDERED MULL MUSLIN.—No. 4.

For bodices cut heart-shaped this collar is exactly suited. The facings are edged with Valenciennes lace, and the designs are in embroidery and appliqué.

FICHU OF MULL MUSLIN AND LACE. Nos. 5 & 6.

This fichu is cut to be worn with a body cut heart-shape. At the front the muslin is folded



FICHU (Front).—No. 5.

and brought down to a point, trimmed round with Valenciennes lace. A bow to match the dress is placed where it is crossed over. It is opened at the back, and trimmed with lace.

FASHIONS.

BONNET TRIMMING.—It is an easy matter to trim straw bonnets. Face the standing front, and, indeed, all the inside edge of the bonnet, with bias silk of a becoming colour, usually, though not necessarily, matching the trimming ribbon. Above this put black thread edging, an inch wide, turned up outside on the straw. The face trimming, a revival of the old-time

and are tied under the chin. All appearance of formal regularity is avoided in the trimming, and there is much room for display of individual taste. Ladies, we fancy, will again return to arranging their own bonnets, as they did before our late intricate fashions were introduced. A great deal of black lace will be used to soften down the hard lines of straw bonnets.

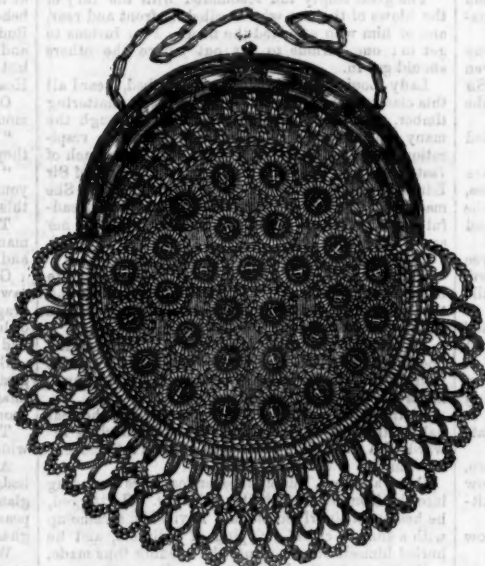
This is the lace made in Brussels, and familiarly known here as thread lace. Scarfs of Brussels net, both plain and figured, bordered with narrow edging, are pendent from the backs of bonnets, and the ribbon strings seen on all spring bonnets will be abandoned for lace strings in warm weather. There are no jet ornaments, and only a few straw ones,

such as pendent balls and acorns; and, as we said before, the trimmings are confined to ribbons, flowers, and lace. A stylish bonnet to wear with any dress, and one that cannot fail to be popular, is a white Milan gipsy,

with black lace ruche in front, black Ottoman ribbon and thread lace round the crown, lace streamers, ribbon strings, and to enliven it a bunch of pink roses or of tea-rose buds, field pinks, buttercups or poppies, or a tiny wreath of rose-buds or fern leaves in front. Ladies who wear their hair in a large Pompadour roll select bonnets that have plain fronts, without high revers, and with very little face trimming. The Pompadour colours are still seen in the blue ribbons and pink roses of many youthful-looking gipsies. Black ribbon, with white chrysanthemums or daisies, is shown for more mature faces. There are fewer brown and gray bonnets than usual, and the fancy for plum-colour is in the ascendant. This shade is pretty with white flowers and black lace. A model bon-

COLLAR IN EMBROIDERY.—No. 1.

cap front, is fastened to bonnet wire placed inside the front, and slightly projecting. It consists of a full ruche of black lace gathered to the wire, or of white tulle with selvedge, or else doubled and pleated, or sometimes a ruche of coloured Frou Frou gauze. Flowers, or a bow of ribbon, are placed in the centre of this ruche, or on the left side, and sometimes all the way across. Outside trimmings surround the crown, and hang in streamers behind. Twine the ribbon round the crown, knotting it irregularly with



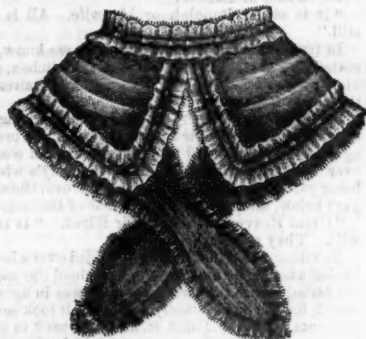
CROCHET PURSE FOR LADIES.—No. 3.

three or four knots, letting the ends hang at the back three-eighths of a yard long, ravelling them into fringe two inches deep, and tied in three little tassels. Another way is to take two pieces of ribbon of two shades, or else one black, the other blue, and fold in layers about the crown, with loops at the side and streamers behind. Sometimes a profusion of bows, with short pointed ends, encircle the crown, or a row of loops overlapping, or of loops of ribbon laid in shells of lace. An easy and pretty way is to put a straight band of ribbon round the crown, and cover the ribbon with a puff of black net; a lace frill or a pleating of ribbon is arranged to stand above this. On the left side there is invariably a flower cluster larger than that in front, but in harmony with it. This is placed very high, with drooping ends, and sometimes trailing flowers fall behind. The curtain used when the bonnet has no straw band is about a finger deep, of ribbon or silk, held in box-pleats. The strings appear from beneath the trimming round the crown, are each a yard long, pass behind the ears,



COLLAR IN EMBROIDERED MULL MUSLIN. No. 4.

net of Milan braid has the high front piece faced with Nile green silk, and below this a black lace ruche, almost concealed by a wreath of glossy green leaves and tiniest rose-buds. A standing frill of Nile green ribbon two inches wide round the crown has a ruche of lace and a wreath at its lower edge. Large shaded rose, with leaves and buds, on the left. The cape is of ribbon, laid double in pleats. Strings of ribbon a yard long. Another Milan gipsy has plum-coloured facings, black lace ruche for face trimming, and lace laid plainly on the edge of the straw. Plum-coloured Ottoman ribbon is knotted round



FICHU (Back).—No. 6.

the crown, streamers of black net edged with lace hang behind; ribbon strings. A cluster of white chrysanthemums is high on the left side. The most youthful bonnet is a sewed chip gipsy, almost con-

cealed with bows of pink gros grain. The face-trimming is entirely of gros grain. A loop of ribbon, with a bow in the centre, is arranged to pass under the châtelaine. Another has milliners' folds of blue China srape and a tea-rose cluster on the outside, while a ruche of blue tulle forms the face trimming. A lovely English straw for a matron has two shades of Ottoman ribbon—mauve and violet—round the crown, with a tea-rose in front, and violets outside.

THE DIAMOND MERCHANT.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE terror and surprise of Rudolph at this second coming of Sir Edred to the "Iron Hand" inn were far greater than they had been before.

Then the diamond merchant had halted before the inn ignorant that his beloved wife was in the house, or even in the territory of the Riders, while he himself was a wanderer from the direct road, lost and alone, seeking nothing except information of his whereabouts.

Now it was evident he came knowing that his wife was there in peril, and that he was attacking with a furious desire for vengeance, and he came not alone. There were others, and how many Rudolph could not imagine. His fears told him there was a troop at Sir Edred's back, or thundering at every door and window on the lower floor.

Besides, the mere fact, so suddenly and unexpectedly revealed, that Sir Edred was alive, so appalling the terror-smitten Rudolph that as the consciousness of this fact burst upon his brain, his joints became as water, and he sank upon his knees, gasping:

"It is Van De Veer, the diamond merchant!"

Now let us briefly explain how it chanced that stout Sir Edred arrived so opportunely at the "Iron Hand" inn, to the paralysing consternation of Rudolph Schwartz.

The reader remembers that we left Sir Edred and Anselm the guide in the forest paths, on their way to the inn, at about the same time that Rudolph and Ernest reached the house on their return from Hansfelt's.

The guide, far more familiar with the numerous paths and cross-cuts of the great forest than even Rudolph, although riding by night, had conducted Sir Edred within a few hundred yards of the inn at the moment when Rudolph threw Ernest into the pit.

It was then near midnight, and both dismounted to reconnoitre the house and its vicinity.

As they advanced on foot the stillness of the place told them that no great company was in the house, or, if so, all were asleep. They went first to the stables, to see if there were many horses there, and found only one horse and a mule.

Assured by this fact that they had no great force to contend against, they separated in the stable yard, Sir Edred moving towards the rear of the inn, while Anselm hurried round to the front, each to make no attempt to enter until they should have met again and consulted, after an examination of all the doors and windows of the lower story.

But as Sir Edred neared the rear door he heard a noise as of some one trampling or kicking something here and there in a kind of fury.

It was then that Rudolph was finishing the scattering of the fiery brands with his heavy boots.

The noise ceased, and Sir Edred continued to listen, with his ear pressed against the door. Having now discovered that some one was awake and in the kitchen, he said to himself:

"It is either Rudolph or his wife. All is now still."

In truth, at that moment Rudolph, we know, was seated on the stool in the centre of the kitchen, grinning with satisfaction over his work, and waiting for the fire to take secure hold.

Suddenly the first cry of Lady Louise rang out keen and piercing. Sir Edred, with his ear pressed against the door, heard this cry as if from a window over his head. The shutter of the lady's window being partly open, her scream rang out over the stable yard below, and the yard in the rear of the house.

"Great Heaven!" thought Sir Edred. "It is my wife. They are murdering her."

He remembered that he had stumbled over a heavy-bladed axe as he and Anselm examined the stables. He darted across the two yards, and was in agonised search for the axe instantly. To find it took several moments. But he found it, and was back to strike and cry out his battle-cry, as was told in the preceding chapter. At the same instant Anselm, hearing the thundering blows at the rear door, began a furious attack upon the front door with the battle-axe that hung at his belt. Sir Edred had left the battle-axe he had taken from Traupmann's smithy hanging on

his saddle, when he and Anselm dismounted to reconnoitre the inn; otherwise Sir Edred would have assailed the rear door upon the first scream of his wife.

"Van De Veer! Van De Veer!" shouted the diamond merchant, as he discharged furious blows upon the door.

The shout, the name, the well-known voice pealed upwards, and was heard by Lady Louise. She recognised that beloved voice with a wild cry of delight and amazement.

"It is Sir Edred! Oh, thank Heaven, it is my husband! He is not dead! He is alive! He is at the rear door. He comes to rescue me. Oh, merciful Heaven, I thank thee! Husband! my husband!" and in a whirlwind of sobs, sobs of inarticulate joy, she became almost unconscious again.

"Van De Veer! Rescue!" shouted Sir Edred, in his thunderlike rage, and raising a storm of blows upon the stubborn though shaking door.

"Sparburg! Sparburg!" cried the shriller voice of the guide as he hacked and hewed at the front door. "Sparburg to the rescue!"

Hearing this cry, and recognising only that it was the rallying shout of the townspeople of Sparburg in times of danger, Rudolph, rapidly recovering from the sudden faintness that had seized his joints, sprang to his foot, muttering:

"It is Sir Edred, with men from Sparburg! Can I escape?"

He believed the house was assailed by at least a hundred men; that it was surrounded on every side; that if he attempted to escape by any of the many windows so jealously fastened by Ulgitha, he would leap into the armed hands of men thirsting for his life.

There was but one way by which he imagined he could escape. There was no time to lose. The edge of Sir Edred's axe had already darted into view through the door. In a moment some of the supposed foes might crash in elsewhere.

Rudolph carried a forester's axe in his belt. He snatched it forth and flew at the same plank by which he had effected the surprise of Ulgitha. He attacked that plank with all his strength, a strength made double by his imminent peril.

The great empty inn resounded with the fury of the blows of the two who assailed its front and rear, and of him who attacked the floor. Two furious to get in; one furious to get out before the others should get in.

Lady Louise, bound helpless to her bed, heard all this clamour, this roar and crash of axes shattering timber, and the echoes reverberating through the many vacant chambers. She inhaled at each respiration the scent of burning wood, and the stench of fast-increasing smoke. She heard the shouts of Sir Edred and the cries of the shrill-voiced guide. She magnified all this confusion, this uproar, into a dreadful strife going on below. She cried aloud in her agony of soul:

"Heaven guard the life of my husband!"

The splinters flew right and left from the desperate blows of Rudolph's axe. The plank, split here and there, began to spring up from the nails and spikes that had held it down.

He dropped his axe. He seized the edges of the opening he had made. There was a crash at the front of the inn—a crash as of a door beaten down, and a wild shout of "Sparburg!"

At the same instant there was a crash in the rear hall of the inn—a crash that told of the hurrying in of a shattered door—a crash and a fierce cry of triumph: "Van De Veer!"

Front and rear, Rudolph's enemies were bounding into the front and rear halls of the inn. He tugged, he heaved at the riven plank. It yielded, it came up with a snap, a crash, a ripping of splinters, and he hurled himself headlong into the opening thus made.

He was under the house and crawling away in an instant. At almost the same instant Sir Edred sprang into the kitchen. The wind and air rushing up through the hole in the floor swept the smoke with which the apartment was murky in great masses around him, and the gleam and crackling of flames added the escape of Rudolph.

"My husband!" cried Lady Louise from above. "Sir Edred!"

"See to the lady," said Anselm as he rushed to Sir Edred's side. "I will look to this foe. There are the stairs—on your right!"

Sir Edred bounded up the stairs, feeling his way, for the light of the burning kitchen scarcely illuminated the hall.

"Louise! wife! Louise!" he shouted as he reached the floor above, where all was blackest darkness and clouds of smoke. "Louise! Where are you, my wife?"

The poor lady was unable to reply. The terrors which pressed upon her brain had again deprived her of consciousness.

The voice of her husband resounded wildly as he

rushed and stumbled here and there amid the darkness and vacancy of empty rooms, crying out the name of his wife.

"Oh, Heaven! she must be dead! They have murdered her!" he groaned, unable to discover in what room she was. "I can do nothing without light."

Guided by the noise made by Anselm below as he fought the flames, Sir Edred hurried back as best he could to the lower floor, where he found the guide half-stiffed, but just victorious over the conquered fire.

"Light! I must have light!" cried Sir Edred, rushing into the kitchen.

"We were near having too much of it," replied the guide, smiling grimly. "Had I delayed my attack on the flames a moment more, the whole house would have been wrapped in fire before we could rescue those above. Have no fear—"

"I tell you my wife is dead—or silent—or Heaven knows what has befallen her and my boy, for all is as dark as midnight above, and no cry answered mine. Light—we must have light."

"Have no fear," said the calmer guide as he pointed at the torn-up plank in the floor. "Rudolph and his wife have escaped by that—even as we broke in at the doors. We need have no fear of them now, for before they can bring the Riders upon us we shall be far away."

While Anselm spoke he was kindling the wick of a lamp he had picked up, there being many red coals still glowing upon the hearth.

"Come," he said, having lighted the lamp, "we will now seek for Lady Van De Veer and the boy. But I warn you, Sir Edred, to be not unprepared to behold a sorry sight."

"Ha! what mean you?" exclaimed Sir Edred as he grasped his companion's arm. "I heard Lady Louise cry out after I crashed in the door, and the cry came as the others I had heard—from above."

"Yes, and we are going above," replied the guide as they hastened up the stairs; "but the boy has made no cry, and that of the lady may have been her last on earth."

"Halt!" said Sir Edred as they reached the hall at the head of the stairs. "Let me gain strength to behold what I may see. Your words warn me that Rudolph and Ulgitha may have murdered my wife and son; that she was dying when she uttered that last shriek; that we may find two corpses! Oh, Heaven!"

Overcome by his emotions, the stout-hearted diamond merchant groaned aloud.

"Courage, Sir Edred! It may not be—though they are an evil pair, and have no mercy in them."

"Go you in advance," gasped Sir Edred. "Let your eyes see first that which is to be seen. Go on; this suspense, this stillness is terrible."

The guide, familiar with the inn, had not advanced many steps when he halted before a half-open door and pointed at the threshold.

Gazing at the threshold Sir Edred trembled, for he saw spots of blood upon it. When Rudolph was dragging Ernest through that door he wounded one of his hands upon a nail, and a few drops of blood had fallen from the wound to the threshold.

But Sir Edred, seeing these stains, ever so suggestive of violent deeds, shuddered, for he instantly imagined a most dreadful sight awaited him in the room.

The guide, fearing the same, gently pushed the door wide open, holding his lamp high advanced.

At the same instant their eager eyes fell upon the bed, and each uttered a cry of horror. At this first glance the face and body of the unconscious lady appeared to be those of a corpse, pale and rigid and ghastly, bound to the bed with cords.

With a hoarse cry of dismay, Sir Edred sprang forward and clasped his wife in his arms. He pressed his lips to her eyes, to her brow, to her cheeks, to her mouth, and even the hardened heart of the guide was softened by the woful lamentations that burst from the soul of this devoted husband.

"Louise! my wife! my wife! dead!—too late!" concluded Sir Edred as he sank down, weak and faint.

Life and reason and memory and heart of love came back to Lady Louise while her husband moaned by her bedside. She opened her eyes; she recognised him; she raised as well as she could her bound arms towards him, and said, in a gentle, clear voice: "Edred—my husband! Thank Heaven we have met again!"

Half a year had passed since these two had seen each other. At any time, to these devoted souls, half a year of separation would have seemed as ten years. But meeting thus, with the scenes and horrors of the past three weeks fresh upon them, their souls now met in an embrace that told each thought ages had gone since the eyes of the one had basked in the love gaze of the other.

"My boy—my brave Ernest! Where is he?" exclaimed Sir Edred, when the first transports of a joy we cannot portray had passed. "My boy! Where is he?"

"Oh, seek for him, seek for him, Edred!" cried Lady Louise, remembering all that had been done by Rudolph in that room. "That dreadful man bound the boy and dragged him from my sight—yes, tonight—it cannot be more than an hour. Leave me, Edred, and seek for Ernest—and Uligtha."

Sir Edred had already cut the cruel cord that bound his wife, and was about to hurry from the room, when the guide said:

"One moment, Sir Edred. You bid us seek also for Uligtha, my lady. Why?"

"She had become our friend. She had driven Rudolph from the inn. She meant honestly towards us. He came back by stealth, and I fear he surprised and killed her below, before he dragged our boy from my sight," said Lady Louise, and in a few rapidly whispered words she told all she knew, as Ernest had told her of the spurious jewels.

"Then we may find the body of Uligtha below," remarked Sir Edred, aloud.

"Ay, and that of the lad," muttered Anselm, who knew well the savage heart of Rudolph. "Come, Sir Edred, if Lady Van De Veer may spare your presence.—But stay! I will make this search alone; perhaps it is not yet safe to leave the lady unguarded."

"True, good Anselm; but find my boy, well and unharmed seriously, and I will make thee the richest man in Sparburg!" exclaimed Sir Edred, who dearly loved the boy, though Ernest was not his son.

"I am bitter in my hate," replied the guide, "but I am strong in my gratitude. You saved my life, and I cannot yet say I have saved yours, Sir Edred. If the lad is in this house, alive or not, I shall soon find him. I will leave this lamp for you. I can find another below."

He left the room and hurried away, with no hope, however, that he might find Ernest Van De Veer alive.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

"Ah, my dear," said a lady to her country cousin, "When you've been a little longer in London, you won't be so green." "Better green than withered," was the retort."

CAPITAL AND INTEREST.—The latest news from Versailles is that the Government intends to attack the capital. The latest news from the Bank of France is that the capital has been attacked and sacked by the Reds!—*Punch*.

A NOISY OFFENDER.—Some people appear to have singular notions of the powers and duties of the police. In a notice of the earthquake in Wales we read that "A lady, in the absence of her husband, much alarmed by the noise, went in great excitement for a police-officer." We are not told what the constable was expected to do. Probably to take the earthquake up; or, at the very least, to report it to the inspector on duty for making a disturbance.—*Punch*.

"TATTLETOO."—A Frenchman said to an Englishman: "Tere is von vord in your language I do not comprehend, and all ze time I hear it. Tattletoo, tattletoo—vat you means by tattletoo?" The Englishman insisted that no such word exists in English. While he was saying so his servant came in to put coal on the fire, when he said: "There, John, that'll do." The Frenchman jumped up, exclaiming: "Tere! tattletoo! you say him yourself, sare. Vat means tattletoo?"

IN THE STREET.

French Gentleman (taking leave of English Lady): "Well, madame, adieu! As to the conduct of England towards us, I fear we shall retain—pardon me—the belief we have long had, that you are a nation of shopkeepers."

English Lady: "Very well. Mistakes will always be made. We long had a belief that you were a nation of soldiers."—(Exit.)—*Punch*.

A CASE FOR THE POLICE.—Last Thursday night, as the family were retiring to rest about half-past ten o'clock, great consternation was caused in the household of two highly-respected maiden ladies residing in a genteel villa on the banks of the Thames, not five minutes' walk from a railway station and omnibuses both to the City and West End, within a convenient distance of two packs of hounds, and in the centre of a good shooting country, by the alarming discovery of a thief in the candle!—*Punch*.

AN UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT.—A short time ago a Quaker lady, a maiden who had reached the age of sixty, accepted the offer of a man who belonged to the "world's people" and the Presbyterian church, and began to prepare for the wedding. As

usual, a delegation of Friends from her meeting waited on her, and remonstrated with her for marrying out of the meeting. The bride-elect heard the visitors, and then said: "Look here! I've been waiting sixty years for the meeting to marry me; and if the meeting don't like me to marry out of it, why don't the meeting bring its suitors forward?" This was conclusive, and the delegation merely replied, "Farewell," and vanished.

STICKING UP FOR AN ABSENT FRIEND.

Miss Frumpington (who has dropped in for a chat about last night's ball): "And can it be true, Clara, that Captain Jinks actually so far forgot himself as to try and kiss you in the conservatory after supper?"

Clara: "He did, indeed, Miss Frumpington. Vulgar little wretch!"

Miss Frumpington: "You surprise me! To me Captain Jinks has always behaved like such a perfect gentleman!"—*Punch*.

A MAIL DELIVERY.—A young lady writing from Ramsgate says:—"On the morning, my dear, we have a delivery of letters by the post. In the afternoon we have another delivery—the delivery of husbands, brothers, cousins, or beloved acquaintances, as the case may be, by the steam packets. In this manner, darling, we have a mail delivery twice a day. It would ill become me to say which one I like best."

MAKE YOUR HOME BEAUTIFUL.

Make your home beautiful;

Bright with rare flowers;

Buds and sweet blossoms;

Herald glad hours;

Beauty and fragrance, with each happy morn,
Chase from sad hearts every vestige of sorrow.

Make your home beautiful;

Welcome the sun;

Splendour so radiant

Why should you shun?

Rays falling o'er you, so gently caressing,
Prove to each nerve both a balm and a blessing.

Make your home beautiful;

Art-works adorn

Humblest of cottages,

Once so forlorn.

After toil's battle, the tired soul reposes,
Soothed by the beauty on which the eye closes.

Make your home beautiful;

Books leave their trace;

Workings of intellect

Glow in the face;

Thoughts of earth's chosen ones, poets or sages,
Grow to be yours while conning their pages.

Make your home beautiful;

Tender joys throng

Fireplaces made holier,

Dearer, with song;

Music, enlivening the sweet hours of leisure,
Makes burdens lighter and labour a pleasure.

Make your home beautiful;

Kind words beguile;

Sweet are the welcomes

Bright with a smile;

Love makes home happy, for gifted or lowly!
Love makes home beautiful—love makes it holy!
L. S. U.

GEMS.

WHAT is the love of restless, roving man? A vagrant stream, that dallies with each flower on its bank, then passes on and leaves them all in tears.

If you suppress the exorbitant love of pleasure and money, idle curiosity, iniquitous pursuits and wanton mirth, what a stillness would there be in the greatest cities!—the necessities of life do not occasion at most a third part of the hurry.

ACQUAINT your children to a strict attention to truth, even in the most minute particulars. If a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them. You do not know where deviations from truth will end.

THE two most precious things on this side the grave are our reputation and our life. But it is to be lamented that the most contemptible whisper may deprive us of the one, and the weakest weapon of the other. A wise man, therefore, will be more anxious to deserve a fair name than to possess it; and this will teach him so to live, as not to be afraid to die.

In our early youth, while yet we live only among those we love, we love without restraint, and our hearts overflow in every look, word, and action. But when we enter the world, and are repulsed by strangers, forgotten by friends, we grow more and more timid in our approaches even to those we love best.

How delightful to us then are the little caresses of children! All sincerity, all affection, they fly into our arms; and then, and then only, we feel our first confidence, our first pleasure.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

STUFFED HAM.—Boil the ham until done, remove the skin and save the juice. Take some bread crumbs, parsley chopped fine, black pepper, butter (and onion if you like it), and mix it up with the juice of the ham; then take the ham on a dish and make incisions with a carving-knife, top or underneath, and with your finger stuff the foremeat in. Cover the ham with it or grated bread crumbs, dust pepper all over it, place it in an oven or stove, and bake twenty-five minutes. Nice for a spring dinner when hot; and elegant, cold, for a meat supper.

HAIR WASH.—Take half an ounce of powdered camphor, one ounce of borax, and a quart of boiling water. Mix, and when cold strain it. Keep it in bottles. The roots of the hair should be damped with it by means of a sponge two or three times a week.

TOOTHACHE DROPS.—An excellent general application to an aching tooth consists as follows:—Chloroform, one ounce; spirits of camphor, one ounce; oil of cloves, half a drachm. Mix, and keep in a glass-stoppered bottle, to prevent evaporation. It may be applied upon a piece of cotton to the hollow of a tooth, and rubbed upon the gums and outside of the face.

STATISTICS.

REVENUE RETURNS.—The following are revenue returns for the past quarter: The total receipts were 23,505,031*l.*; being a decrease of 1,323,735*l.* on the amount for the corresponding period of last year. There was an increase of 351,000*l.* in the Excise, of 120,000*l.* in the Post-office, and of 6,000*l.* in the Crown lands department; making a total increase of 477,000*l.*, against a decrease of 1,890,735*l.* This decrease was in the following items: Customs, 14,000*l.*; stamps, 13,000*l.*; taxes, 246,000*l.*; property tax, 1,110,000*l.*; and miscellaneous, 417,735*l.* The receipts for the year ending March 31, 1871, were less than those for the year ending 12 months since by 5,489,032*l.* Of this 1,338*l.* is on Customs, 241,000*l.* on stamps, 1,775,000*l.* on taxes, and 3,694,000*l.* on property tax. Against the decrease there is an increase in the Excise of 1,025,000*l.*; in the Post-office, of 100,000*l.*; telegraphs, 400,000*l.*; Crown lands, 10,000*l.*; and miscellaneous, 23,968*l.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE nightingale was heard on Sunday, 26th of March, at Tonbridge.

A VOLUNTEER review will probably be held on Portadown-hill in four or five weeks. The volunteers will be assisted by regular troops.

THE Duke of Argyll is offering for sale the fine estate of Roseneath, for several centuries one of the seats of the Argyll family, and which comprises the castle and 7,300 acres.

H.E.H. PRINCE ARTHUR has presented to the museum of the Royal Artillery at Woolwich a converted Springfield rifle and bayonet, and an United States cavalry sword, taken from a Fenian prisoner captured in a skirmish in Canada on the 15th of May, 1870.

THE American Congress has taken steps to prevent the extermination of the buffalo, now so rapidly disappearing from the prairies of the great west, in consequence of their indiscriminate slaughter by the trappers without reference to the use of the carcass for food or fur.

AN ancient gold coin, in an excellent state of preservation, was recently found in Kingaholm Close, Gloucester, the burial place of the Romans when encamping near that city. The coin is of the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius, fifth of the twelve Cæsars, born A.D. 10; died, A.D. 54. The coin, therefore, is more than 1,800 years old. On the obverse is the head of the emperor, with name and titles; on the reverse, "Paci Augustae," Peace or Nemesia, marching to the right, holding a caduceus; a serpent rising from the ground before her.

SHOCKS of earthquake occurred on the 19th of February in the Hawaiian Islands, and were general throughout the group. In Laysan great rocks were hurled down from cliffs, and some of the valleys were rendered incapable of cultivation by the debris from the mountains. Great wonder is expressed that no lives were lost on any of the islands. At Honolulu the shocks commenced at 10.7 p.m., were three in number, and followed in rapid succession, lasting altogether over one minute. At the other islands the time was different, the last shock occurring at Lahiva at 11.24 p.m.

No. 4. GEMS OF MELODY.

Il Trabesti—Dibertimento.

LEONARD BURROWES.

Andante pomposo.

PIANO. *pf*

lento.

più lento. dolce.

Minore. pp

dolce. lento.

CODA. *8va, sostenuto.*

dolce. scherzo.

8va

cres.

loco

cres.

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